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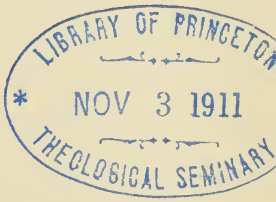
A CHINESE APPEAL TO CHRISTENDOM

CONCERNING

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS



BY

LIN SHAO-YANG, pseud.

Sir R. F. Johnston

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A CHINESE APPEAL TO CHRISTENDOM

CONCERNING

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

A CHINESE APPEAL TO CHRISTENDOM

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF CHRISTENDOM AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

WESTERN residents in the Far East are never weary of emphasising the strangeness and inaccessibility of the Oriental mind. We Chinese, more especially, are continually hearing ourselves criticised as insoluble puzzles. "The European who can understand the Chinese character," said one who had spent forty years in the East, "has not been born into this world." Our Western guests may like us or dislike us, they may magnify our failings or they may speak enthusiastically of our merits, but they will one and all declare with emphasis that we are inscrutable. Very few seem to guess that we Chinese may have the same difficulty in understanding the West that they have in understanding the East; yet surely it should strike them as unreasonable to suppose that if the Oriental

mind is opaque to them the Occidental can be wholly transparent to us. If I may presume, indeed, to regard myself as an average representative of my race, I may say with confidence that the Chinese find much that is baffling and mysterious in Western thought, Western character, and Western ideals. After a boyhood and youth spent in the other hemisphere I returned to China with a far more serious doubt about my capacity to interpret Western modes of thought to my fellow-countrymen than when, as a mere child, I went back to the bosom of my family after my first brief visit to one of the great European settlements on the Chinese coast.

But it is not my intention in these pages to discuss the question of whether there be indeed some natural law that has set up an impenetrable barrier between East and West. I wish only to draw attention to one sphere of Western activity that denotes an attitude of mind which we Chinese often discuss among ourselves, and which none of us has ever been able fully to understand or to explain. I refer to the work of the Christian missions.

Lest I should be grievously misunderstood, I must hasten to explain that many of us non-Christian Chinese have a fair knowledge of your sacred books, and are acquainted with the more obvious reasons (including the alleged commands of the founder of Christianity) that impel you to send missionaries to convert us to your faith. What puzzles us is not merely that you should desire to spread your religion among the people you call heathen, nor that you should be willing to devote time, money, and personal service to this work, nor even that your missionaries should be willing to die for the cause that to them is sacred: all these things we Orientals can to some extent understand. What we wonder

at is that your missionary zeal should not only remain unabated, but should actually show signs of increasing activity during an epoch which is obviously one of religious unrest throughout all Christian lands, and in which historical research and scientific methods of criticism have caused the gravest doubts to be thrown on the truth of some of the fundamental propositions of the Christian faith. A garrisoned city does not send away the flower of its troops when a powerful enemy is thundering at its gates. A king whose throne is shaken by insurrection within his own dominions and whose capital is being plundered by rebels does not send his most loyal soldiers on adventurous expeditions to foreign lands. It seems strange to those of us who are familiar with the religious situation in Europe that, while unbelief is rapidly spreading among all classes of their own people, missionaries yet go forth in ever-increasing numbers to preach the gospel to the heathen. Do they propose to convert China and then wait for the Chinese to re-convert the West?

Perhaps few things are more astonishing to the observant Chinese student when he visits a Western country than his discovery that a very great number —if not the majority—of the educated men with whom he comes in contact have either renounced Christianity altogether or have remained within the Christian fold only from motives of expediency, perhaps through mere habit or indifference, or because they believe in the social value of the Church of their country as a constituent element in the national life. The next significant discovery he makes is that his rationalist, agnostic, and freethinking acquaintances are just as well-behaved and high-principled as the most orthodox of believers. A recent writer in Christian Scotland, himself a believer, admits that "there is at present a widespread alienation

from the Christian faith."[1] Canon Henson of Westminster sorrowfully observes that "Christianity no longer holds the supreme position which for centuries it has held in the thought of civilised men."[2] Prof. Henry Jones says, "there is a seething of religious beliefs and a lawless raging of social forces the like of which has probably not been seen before." That some of the acutest intellects of the English universities are gravely heterodox in religious matters is a truth that hardly requires emphasis. The works of such distinguished writers as Dr. McTaggart, of Trinity College, Cambridge, would certainly not be allowed to see the light if their publication were dependent on an ecclesiastical imprimatur.[3] One of the most able and most damaging of recent criticisms of historical Christianity comes from the pen of one who has been the fellow and prælector of an Oxford college, and whose biblical researches have earned him an honorary doctorate of theology from Giessen.[4] Another Oxford tutor declares that the hold of Christianity on educated young Englishmen was never weaker than it is to-day.[5] A third Oxford thinker, Mr. H. Sturt, who has lost the honour of persecution through being born a few generations too late, has recently published a book in which he holds that, in spite of the poetry and beauty of much of the Old Testament, and the ethical nobleness of the teachings ascribed to Jesus, "of all the terrible intellectual disasters of Europe the Bible has been by far the greatest." He believes

[1] Dr. Pearson McAdam Muir, in *Modern Substitutes for Christianity.*

[2] *The Liberty of Prophesying* (London: Macmillan & Co.).

[3] See especially his admirable work, *Some Dogmas of Religion* (London: Edward Arnold, 1906).

[4] I refer to Mr. F. C. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals* (London: Watts & Co., 1909).

[5] H. W. Garrod, Fellow and Tutor of Merton College, in *The Religion of All Good Men.*

that "the ideal of life which Christianity implies is contrary to the best tendencies of the age; that the religion of Christianity has been superseded in the minds of thinking men by a new religious attitude which has for a long time been growing up silently; that its theology has nothing to do with any of our effective convictions, and has therefore ceased to be a subject of rational interest; that its scriptures are alien books which have no relation to our national history and character, and have done great harm by drawing the nation's thoughts away from the record of its own great deeds and the commemoration of its own heroes."

One cannot take up a serious journal nowadays without finding repeated references to the present crisis in Christian belief—the subject being variously treated according to the points of view of different writers. *The Hibbert Journal*—of its kind perhaps the most valuable and interesting periodical published in the English language—opens its columns to religious and philosophic writers of every shade of belief and disbelief, and a short study of its pages is enough to indicate how severely the foundations of dogmatic Christianity have been shaken by modern criticism, and how much of the superstructure has already fallen into decay. The Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross says that the evolutionary idea "has revolutionised the presentation of the Christian religion. It has almost fundamentally altered our view of Holy Scriptures, of the history it contains, and of the doctrines it upholds."[2] Mr. Lowes Dickinson—a writer who certainly cannot be charged with being a truculent iconoclast—believes

[1] *The Idea of a Free Church*, pp. 17–18, 303 (The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1909; second edition, published by Watts & Co., London).

[2] *The Hibbert Journal*, July, 1908, p. 765.

that no religion "which ought properly to be called Christian can adequately represent the attitude of an intelligent and candid modern man. . . . I need hardly add that *a fortiori* Roman Catholic or Anglican theology is, in my judgment, incompatible with modern knowledge."[1] The Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas observes that "the imposing structure of dogma is everywhere falling into ruin. It must be added that many expert theologians have been for a long time perfectly well aware of the fact. But until recently they have more or less successfully suppressed the most alarming symptoms and allayed popular panic by energetic protestations that the ancient building was still secure. This pretence can continue no longer. The impending collapse is obvious even to the untrained observer. Orthodoxy has at last been brought before the tribunal of public opinion, and with specially disastrous results for the Protestant religion."[2] Writing in another periodical, an English clergyman admits that the results of the historical criticism of the early Christian documents "have brought about a widespread scepticism as to the historicity of the Christian records."[3]

It is clear from such quotations as these (and they might be multiplied indefinitely) that even if an inquirer were altogether to ignore the writings of professed disbelievers and the publications of such energetic agencies as the Rationalist Press Association, and were to confine himself wholly to the works of the more conservative theological and biblical scholars and professors of Apologetics, he would speedily be convinced that the Christian dogmas are being assailed to-day by

[1] *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1908, p. 515.

[2] *Ibid.*, July, 1907, p. 798.

[3] The Rev. W. B. Selbie, in *The Contemporary Review*, Feb., 1909, p. 205.

scientific critics and even by ethical reformers with a vigour and success that totally differentiate the present movement from the various crises through which the Christian Church has passed in connection with the heresies and schisms of past centuries. In Europe and America theologians such as Harnack, Schmiedel, Wilhelm Soltau, Weinel, Rudolf Schmid, Deissmann, Prof. Wernle of Basel, Loisy, Le Roy, and numerous others, are, each in his own way, subjecting the Christian traditions and dogmas to so drastic a process of attenuation or re-interpretation that it is difficult to see how the Christianity that survives their treatment can consider itself entitled to the name it continues to bear. Certainly it is not the Christianity that is being most widely preached in China to-day. Writers like Sir Oliver Lodge and the late Mr. Hugh MacColl in England, and the late Prof. James and Prof. Wenley and others in America, have tried to save what they personally regard as the essential truths of Christianity by the wholesale sacrifice of much that has hitherto been considered essential by the accredited exponents of orthodox Christian doctrine. They, or some of them, hope to bring about a reconstruction of religious concepts on a safer foundation than that of historical evidence, by means of the ethico-religious consciousness itself. The methods and conclusions of natural science and the results of the historico-critical investigation of the Old and New Testaments have brought about—according to Wenley—the collapse of dogmatic Christianity; therefore if Christianity is to be saved in any shape at all it must rest on something better than unverifiable dogma.[1]

Three books on the Christian religion, written by

[1] See D. C. Macintosh's review of Prof. R. M. Wenley's *Modern Thought and the Crisis in Belief* (The Baldwin Lectures, 1909), in *The American Journal of Theology*, Oct., 1909, p. 631.

three American professors, were recently issued almost on the same date. "All three declare with equal emphasis," says a fourth American professor who wrote a review of their works, "that the Christian Church is now confronted by a crisis of peculiar gravity and urgency."[1] Still more remarkable, as a sign of the times, is the growth of the New Theology in or alongside of the Church of England and its Nonconformist rivals, and the growth of Modernism in or alongside of the Church of Rome. M. Loisy and the Rev. R. J. Campbell are among the leaders of movements which threaten the citadels of Orthodox Roman and Evangelical Christianity alike. Irrespective of the direct influence of Modernism, which is costing the Church some of her ablest and most devoted sons, Rome is receiving blow after blow from every land that has hitherto owned her sway. Those who have perused Mr. J. McCabe's important work on *The Decay of the Church of Rome*[2] are aware that if his figures are reliable the losses suffered by that Church during the past seven decades amount at least to 80,000,000 souls[3]; and he shows that of the total of 190,000,000 Romanists now in the world more than 120,000,000 must be classed as illiterates. The majority of Catholic adherents consist, he tells us, of "American Indians, half-castes, negroes, and mulattoes; Italian, Spanish, Russian, and Slavonic peasants of the most backward character; and Indian, Indo-Chinese, and African natives. These make up much more than half the whole. Further, the great bulk of the remainder are the peasants and poor workers of Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, and Ireland."[4] As for France, once the proud "eldest daughter of the

[1] See *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1908, p. 500.
[2] Published, in 1909, by Messrs. Methuen & Co.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 297 *seq.*
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 305.

Church," the number of the faithful has fallen to no more than 6,000,000 (at most) out of a population of 39,000,000.[1] France is no longer a Catholic nation, and she has adopted no other form of Christianity. Similarly, free-thought and anti-clericalism are steadily increasing in all the other so-called Catholic countries of Europe, including Spain, Portugal, and Italy. In many parts of those lands the influence of the Church has almost wholly vanished, and her priests are objects of detestation, fear, or contempt.[2]

Yet the missionary zeal of Christendom in Asia and other parts of the "heathen" world was perhaps never more active than it is at this day! The Chinese, as I have said, cannot pretend fully to understand this strange phenomenon. But though as a non-Christian I hesitate to express opinions of my own on a subject which concerns Christian motives, I may perhaps venture to call attention to certain facts which may, partially at least, explain the almost feverish missionary activity that is being shown at present by militant Christendom.

It should be remembered, to begin with, that numerous as are the benevolent people who regularly support foreign missions, they form but a minute fraction of the population of their respective countries, and that, vast as is the aggregate amount of money annually subscribed for mission purposes, it is an almost negligible trifle when compared with the amounts spent on personal pleasure and luxury.[3] As to the sources from which

[1] *The Decay of the Church of Rome*, p. 33.

[2] This was written before the expulsion of the monks and nuns from Portugal.

[3] Referring to the collection of mission-funds, that able and clear-sighted observer, Mr. Meredith Townsend, writes thus: "If we had the means of deducting the contributions of about 2000 families who are the mainstay of all missionary bodies and of all charities, the amount

funds are obtained, it may be said that the supporters of foreign missions are of two classes. A great number contribute to mission work only through the ordinary medium of church collections. They go to church as a matter of weekly routine, and take with them the sum of money that they are in the habit of presenting. If the collections for the day are intended to swell a hospital-fund, their shillings will go to hospitals accordingly; should the parson announce that the collections will go to foreign missions, their contributions will be duly devoted to the expensive process of saving heathen souls. In a vast number of cases the church-member who adds his coin to the heap on the offertory plate neither knows nor (perhaps) very much cares what the destination of his coin may be. He feels sure that it will be used for a good purpose, and with that assurance he is content. The other class of supporters of foreign missions consists of those who happen to take a keen personal interest in that form of Christian activity, and deliberately devote money and time, and perhaps the labour of their own hands and brains, to the advancement of their favourite philanthropic enterprise. Many are stirred to generosity by the thrilling appeal of a missionary who has returned to his native land on holiday; the charitable or religious instincts of others are aroused through reading the biographies of famous missionaries or accounts of Christian martyrdoms. Many are members of a Bible society or of a society for the propagation of the gospel, and they are constant readers of missionary periodicals in which the moral and religious condition of heathen lands is always painted in sombre colours. The large donations and bequests which so frequently come to the net of the missionary associa-

raised by the Churches would not appear large, and it is raised with extreme difficulty" (*Asia and Europe*, 2nd ed., p. 74).

tions, and without which mission work could hardly be carried on, are chiefly derived from warm-hearted people of this kind—most of them, though by no means all, being persons who have never visited a heathen country, and who implicitly accept the missionary's point of view. Such persons—the main supporters of missionary enterprise, and the class from which missionaries themselves are chiefly drawn—are not, as a rule, keen students of the deeper problems of religion or philosophy. They have always been Christians, they are perplexed by no doubts or difficulties, the higher criticism is a thing they leave severely alone, "new theologies" they taboo, and the moral stumbling-blocks and the historical inaccuracies of the Scriptures they cheerfully ignore. If some book or magazine article now and again startles them by a hint that the religious situation is not all that it should be, they are speedily consoled by the soothing words of another book or another magazine article which tells them that the assaults of infidelity and the critical investigations of scholars have resulted only in establishing the truths of Christianity more firmly than ever, and that it is only knaves who preach agnosticism or free-thought, and only fools who listen to them. The non-Christians of their own land—those who have voluntarily left the Christian fold because they could no longer conscientiously remain within it—are classed by them among anarchists, bomb-throwers, and enemies of public and private morality. What such wicked people may have to say for themselves they neither know nor care to be told. They still have an impression —more or less definite according to the sect or branch of Christianity to which they belong—that the fires of hell are awaiting the souls of the unbaptised heathen, and their natural benevolence incites them to provide the means of salvation. These are the people who in the

last generation or two have responded most eagerly to the summons to aid in the great work of evangelising the heathen.[1]

But now we come to what I take to be the principal reason for the present activity of foreign missions and for the deep interest which is beginning to be taken in

[1] I may say that personally I have no objection to the term "heathen" except in so far as it indicates a certain attitude of rather irritating contempt on the part of the arrogant Christian for his non-Christian fellow-creatures. In itself the word is harmless enough, and it is less clumsy than "non-Christian." Both, of course, are unscientific. From the point of view of comparative religion it is misleading to put all the religions of the world into two classes—Christianity alone occupying one class and all other religions lumped together in the other. The curious thing is that one rarely if ever hears the term "heathen" or the term "pagan" used by Anglo-Saxons in China unless they happen to be missionaries or are in strong sympathy with missionary work. At the close of a paper by the veteran missionary Dr. W. A. P. Martin, in which he seems to advocate the peculiar policy of baptising large bodies of Chinese *en masse* even if they do not understand Christian doctrine, may be found the following remarkable words: "Entire communities will then come forward, impelled by a variety of motives, of which the shame of being stigmatised as 'heathen' may prove to be not the least effective" (*The Chinese Recorder*, Nov., 1909, p. 627). There seems to be a curious confusion of thought here. "Heathen" is simply a word used by Christians to denominate non-Christians, and as most Christians are arrogant enough to suppose that their religion alone is true, the word "heathen"—meaning for them "a believer in false doctrines"—has to their ears an offensive sound. But obviously the heathen himself does not take the same view of the relative positions of Christianity and his own faith. If he were satisfied in his own mind that Christianity is the true religion, he would *ipso facto* be a Christian, whether he publicly professed his adherence to that faith or not; whereas if he does not believe that Christianity is true, but believes, on the contrary, in the truth of his own religion, he cannot have the slightest objection to being "stigmatised" as a non-Christian. If he shows irritation at being called a heathen it will not be because he is "ashamed" of being classed among non-Christians, but because he knows that the term as used by foreigners is uncharitably intended by them to indicate their sense of his inferiority to themselves. [*Cf.* Huxley's *Science and Christian Tradition* (Eversley Series), pp. 210 *seq.*, 240 *seq.*, *à propos* of Dr. Wace's observations on the "unpleasant significance" of the word "infidel."]

the subject by large numbers of people who have hitherto regarded it with indifference.

Great political events have occurred, and are still occurring, which tend to alter profoundly the old relations between Europe and Asia. The Asiatic peoples are awaking, or have already awakened, from their long slumber, and are showing themselves determined to take their proper places in the world as independent, civilised, and progressive nations. They have no intention of acquiescing in the permanent superiority or dominance of the great states of the West, and for this very reason they are keenly desirous, at the present time, of acquiring a knowledge of the arts and sciences which, as they now see, have so largely contributed to the material strength and prosperity of the Western Powers. They do not wholly admire the civilisation of the West; in some respects they regard it as inferior to their own, but they fully recognise the necessity of adapting to their own requirements those elements of the Occidental system that make for political stability, military efficiency, and social welfare. For the time being, therefore, we Chinese have become the willing pupils of the West. Christianity is not one of the characteristics of Western civilisation with which we have specially asked to be endowed, but it is not to be wondered at that the Christian Churches have eagerly seized upon a unique and magnificent opportunity to spread the gospel among a vast heathen people that comprises more than a fourth of the world's population. Notwithstanding the grave perils that menace them at home, the Churches instinctively recognise that now, if ever, is the time to plant the Cross on the soil of China. They realise that if this chance is allowed to slip by it may never come again; but that if the chance is seized, and if the great missionary enterprise is crowned with success, it is

not impossible that in the dim future a Christian China may help to establish Western civilisation on a world-wide basis and revive and rejuvenate the decaying forces of Christianity in the Western hemisphere.

Thus the point which chiefly concerns us here is this. Until recent times the sole or predominant motive of missionary Christianity in evangelising the East was the saving of heathen souls and the widening of the boundaries of the kingdom of righteousness. In other words, the aim of foreign missions was almost entirely a religious one (except when it was political, or definitely associated with political designs), and therefore only attracted persons who believed that without the Christian faith the heathen would be engulfed in eternal darkness. But now many people are being forced to the conclusion that missionary work has a sternly practical side which deserves serious attention even from those in whom belief in dogmatic Christianity is wholly dead; that in supporting foreign missions they may be contributing to the salvation not merely of heathen souls, but of the whole fabric of Western civilisation.[1] There is a vague but growing fear in the West that a trained and educated but unchristian China will be a constant menace to the stability of Western institutions and a danger to civilised mankind. Thus the character of missionary effort has undergone a fundamental change. The West now wishes to evangelise

[1] "Missions were begun when distant lands were practically unknown and their religions unstudied, and all alike regarded as simply false and the dark products of the Evil One, whose adherents were all morally and irretrievably ruined and exposed to a hopeless doom. All this is changed; and *missions have to be continued with an entirely different set of ideals filling the popular mind.*"—T. E. Slater, of the London Missionary Society, in *Missions and Sociology*, p. 64 (London: Elliot Stock, 1908).

the heathen not from altruistic motives only, but with a view to its own safety.[1]

This modification in the missionary attitude is not avowed by the missionaries themselves; indeed, very many of them, as the following chapters will show, seem to be unaware that there has been any modification at all, and regard the awakening of China almost entirely from the point of view of Christian philanthropy. At the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1907 a unanimous resolution was passed to the effect that the new political and social conditions in China now rendered it possible for every individual in the empire to be told of "the redeeming death and resurrection and the heart-transforming power of Jesus Christ"; and the Conference appealed "to the whole Christian world to rise in its might, and, trusting to the guidance of Almighty God, realise more adequately its responsibility in this gigantic undertaking." More recently—at a meeting held in London under the auspices of the China Inland Mission in the autumn of 1909—one of the speakers stated that "altogether 4800 men were wanted in China in the near future for mission work"; while in a pamphlet published by the same mission[2] the ideal is held out of one foreign missionary for every 25,000 of the native population. This would give a total of 16,000 Protestant missionaries for the whole empire in addition to native clergy and lay preachers.[3]

[1] For a further discussion of this point of view, see Chapter XIX.

[2] *Present-Day Conditions in China*, by Marshall Broomhall (Morgan and Scott, 1908).

[3] The Roman Catholic converts in China are said to number 720,540 at the present time. [See *The Decay of the Church of Rome*, p. 302, by J. McCabe.] According to the *Twenty-second Annual Report of the Christian Literature Society* (Protestant): "The Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians together number at present only 1¼ millions, and the annual net increase of Christian membership is less than 100,000, while the natural increase of the Chinese population is reckoned

These resolutions and speeches contain few hints that missionary enterprise must now be regarded not merely as a means of illuminating the darkness of the heathen, but also as a necessary agency for the protection and preservation of the distinctive civilisation of the West. Elsewhere, however, we may find abundant evidence of the prevalence of this view. It has been strongly emphasised, for example, by the promoters of the United Universities Scheme, which aims at establishing a Christian University in Central China. In a later chapter I shall have occasion to offer some remarks on this important project, which need not therefore engage our attention at present.[1] The importance of foreign missions as a means of protecting the interests of Western civilisation was insisted on by some of the speakers and writers at the World Missionary Conference held at

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at four millions annually. The task before us is therefore stupendous." It is indeed, if every year the *new* heathens outnumber the *new* Christians by no fewer than 3,900,000! Obviously China can never be christianised *at the present rate of progress*, for the numerical difference between Christians and heathens, so far from becoming narrower, is growing enormously wider every year. Of course, this state of things would soon be altered if conversions to Christianity began to take place *en masse;* but there does not seem to be any immediate prospect of that. From Broomhall's *Chinese Empire* (London: 1907) it appears that there are no less than seventy-one separate Protestant societies supporting missionaries in China. The total number of "communicants" is stated in this work to be 154,142; but there is another body of 93,878 described as "adherents." The population of China, according to the most recent estimate (quoted by Mr. Broomhall), is 426,000,000. If Mr. McCabe's figures are correct, the entire body of Christians in China (including Catholics and Protestants of all denominations) would appear to be only 968,560, even if Protestant "adherents" are added to the "communicants." Granting that there are about one million Christians in China, it appears that the proportion of Christians to "heathen" is less than one in four hundred, or a quarter of 1 *per cent.* The number of Protestant missionaries in China in 1907 was 3719. This works out at about sixty-one native Christians to each missionary.

[1] See Chapter XIX.

Edinburgh last year. *The Scotsman* newspaper, after remarking that the Conference promised to be an epoch-making event in the history of Christianity, drew attention to the grave dangers now ahead of Western civilisation and to the active part that missionary Christianity may take in averting such dangers.

> The World Missionary Conference [said *The Scotsman*] is the result of that great revolution which has taken place in the non-Christian nations in recent years. Until a short time ago it was taken for granted that the East should bow down before the West. But suddenly the East has sprung to life. The spectacle of the heathen actually beating a Christian Power has confronted the world with hitherto unthought-of possibilities. The sudden rise of Japan to the position of a first-class Power; the slow awakening of the millions of China to a consciousness of their latent power; the revival of Mohammedanism in the shape of a reformed Turkey—these have forced on the Christian Churches the question as to whether the future of the world is to be in Christian or in heathen hands. In Africa Mohammedanism, according to the testimony of travellers, is spreading like a prairie fire. . . . It is the sudden emergence of problems such as this that constituted the necessity for the World Missionary Conference. . . . It needs the concerted action of all the Churches to meet a menace such as that.[1]

As I have pointed out, there is probably no Oriental who has sufficient insight into the Western character to justify him in making any dogmatic assertion with regard to the peculiar problems suggested by Christian missions. But perhaps in the foregoing considerations may be found a more or less sufficient explanation of the unwonted activity in missionary effort which the Christian communities of the West are showing at the

[1] *The Scotsman*, Feb. 23, 1910.

present time. Whatever the full explanation may be, the undoubted increase in missionary activity makes it urgently necessary that extreme care should be taken in the selection of missionary candidates, in the supervision of their methods in the "field," and in scrutinising and correcting their varying conceptions of the essentials of Christian doctrine. It is because I am firmly convinced that some of the teachings and methods of very many foreign missionaries are seriously defective in themselves, harmful to the people of China, and disastrous to the causes of truth, civilisation, and international harmony, that I have obliged myself to undertake the difficult and cheerless task of issuing this Appeal to the People of the Christian West.

In order to explain my meaning fairly and adequately it will be necessary for me to express my thoughts with a freedom and directness that may, I fear, outrage the susceptibilities of many who still cling fondly to the religion of their fathers, and may perhaps wound the feelings of some who, while they have renounced the dogmas of Christianity, continue to hold in deepest reverence the ideal believed by them to have been realised in the person of Jesus. I can only assure them that, whatever may be the general impression gained by them from the following pages, they will not be justified in supposing that there has been any intention on my part to scoff or cavil at things that better men than myself hold sacred. Also, I should like my readers to understand that if some of my statements appear to be crudely dogmatic they are only so expressed for the sake of conciseness and the avoidance of ambiguity, and their apparent dogmatism does not faithfully represent my mental attitude.[1] I should like the words "It seems to me," or "In the light of the evidence so far accessible

[1] *Omnis sermo noster dubitationis sale sit conditus.*

to me I am inclined to think," to be understood in front of every statement of personal belief or opinion that finds place in this book. I wish, moreover, to emphasise the fact that the complaints I have to make concerning missionaries and their methods and teachings by no means extend to missionaries of all types and classes. Among your Christian teachers in China there are men and women who are living noble and inspiring lives, and are brightening thousands of Chinese homes by innumerable acts of warm-hearted benevolence, neighbourly kindness, and devoted self-sacrifice. There are cultivated Christians who may be said to exemplify in their own aims and conduct the highest ideals of Western civilisation—teachers from whom we Chinese can learn nothing but good. There are men and women who, by devoting their main energies to medical or educational work, are benefiting the minds and bodies of innumerable Chinese in a manner that deserves and receives our homage and admiration. If in the course of the following pages hardly anything is said of the splendid work done by such missionaries as these, it is not because I am unconscious of the incalculable benefit they are conferring upon many Chinese, but for the very reason that I regard them as so far above all criticism that praise would be superfluous and—as coming from a convinced non-Christian—might be regarded as presumptuous. If this highest type of Christian missionary were the only type of which China has experience there would be no justification for the issue of this Appeal; for though I repudiate the assumption that a belief in Christian theology or in Christian dogmas is a necessary preliminary either to virtue and happiness in this world or to salvation in the next I gladly admit that such a belief has been, to multitudes of people in the Western lands, the mainspring of their actions, hopes,

and ideals, and has been the chief source of the inspiration that has impelled some of the best and noblest of Western men and women to devote their lives to the advancement of Christian civilisation in the heathen East.

[Note.—Perhaps I may take this opportunity of stating that I shall be glad to receive, through the publishers of this Appeal, any criticisms, suggestions, or expressions of opinion—whether friendly or adverse—which readers may feel disposed to offer on the subjects dealt with in the course of these chapters. My correspondents will not omit, I trust, to state whether they object to the future publication of such letters as they may be good enough to address to me, and whether, in the event of such publication, I may regard myself as at liberty to make use of their names.]

CHAPTER II

THE PROSPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FAR EAST

A YOUNG Japanese fellow-student of mine was once discussing with me the prospects of Christianity in the Far East. "We Japanese," said my friend, "will not become Christians, but Japan may adopt Christianity." When I asked him to explain this paradox, he told me of the opinion held by many influential people in Japan that their country will never be regarded by the great Western Powers as a thoroughly respectable and civilised state so long as it remains outside the pale of Christianity. "It is not," he explained, "that the Western peoples really care very much whether we become sincere believers in their creed or not: how could they, seeing that they are ceasing to believe in it themselves? But they have not yet grown out of their inherited superstition that true civilisation and the Christian religion are inextricably bound up with one another, and that the heathen must necessarily—so long as they remain heathen—be more or less barbarous in manners and morally corrupt. Our Japanese sensitiveness and national pride make us rebel against being classed with people who clothe themselves in girdles of feathers, and wave tomahawks, and eat their prisoners of war, and it is quite possible that with the view of raising the status

of the country in the eyes of the Western world, our Government may some day decide to declare Christianity the State religion. But there will be no attempt made to tamper with the existing religious practices of the people. Christianity may be nominally adopted as the State creed, but this will be purely for political or economic reasons—perhaps owing to the state of the money market and the difficulty of raising foreign loans—and the statesmen that bring about this outward change in our religious attitude would not dream of compelling us to become converts to the foreign faith, even if they had the power to do so." "Surely," I said, "you are attributing an unheard-of degree of cynicism to your statesmen." "I do not for a moment deny it," was the reply; "but all successful statesmanship, in the present state of the world, rests to some extent on a basis of cynicism." "You are also assuming," I remarked, "that foreign observers will be so obtuse as not to see through this manœuvre." "Some might see through it," said my Japanese friend, "but they would be powerless to hamper its success. Almost the only Western residents in Japan are merchants, diplomatists, and missionaries. The merchants care too little about religion themselves to bother their heads about the matter; the diplomatists might send confidential despatches to their Governments expressing doubts as to the sincerity of the Christian movement, but their despatches would be merely pigeon-holed and forgotten; and as for the missionaries, I do not anticipate that any denunciations of Japanese cynicism would come from them. They would be so delighted at the prospect of an even nominally Christian Japan that they would meet the Government half-way, and any doubts that they might have about official motives would be stifled

under the belief that a simulated acceptance of the Christian faith would inevitably give place sooner or later to a wholly genuine belief. Meanwhile the mere announcement that the Emperor of Japan had declared Christianity to be the State religion would fill the foreign missionary societies with holy rapture, pæans of thanksgiving would go up from half the churches in Europe and America, and the missionary journals would jubilantly spread abroad the glad tidings of how God had at last vindicated himself in the strongest fortress of heathendom." "And what date do you assign," I asked, "for your Government to take this momentous step?" "I do not say that the step will be taken at all," was the reply; "I merely suggest the possibility. As a matter of fact it is conceivable that China might take it even sooner than Japan, though for rather different reasons. If our two countries were about to go to war with one another again, your country might officially adopt Christianity with the view of enlisting Western sympathy against mine. Think how the Christian pulpits of Europe and America would ring with denunciations of the Western Governments if they stood idly by while a weak but Christian China was grappling with a strong but heathen Japan!"

If I hesitate to endorse this Japanese view of future religious possibilities in the Far East, it is not because I regard it as by any means fantastic, but because there seems to be no probability that religious considerations, however commanding a position they may occupy in the relations between individuals, will in these latter days affect very seriously the political or economic relations between Eastern and Western states. Great Britain did not scorn to ally herself with a heathen power, and made no stipulation that her partner's plenipotentiaries should sign the Thirty-

nine Articles before they signed the treaty of alliance. The alleged hatred of Australians and Americans for Orientals does not appear to be rooted in religious disagreements. The Christian West did not intervene to save Christian Russia from receiving punishment at the hands of pagan Japan. That the proud West dislikes Orientals may be true enough; but this is due to racial and sociological and, perhaps, especially to industrial causes, far more than to religious differences. If a European Power makes demands on China that she would not dare to make upon a great Western state, she does so not because of any superiority that she may possess through her status as a Christian Power, but because she is conscious of her own political strength and China's political weakness. The arrogance of the West in its dealings with China will pass away when China becomes a great Power, even though she remains heathen; it would never pass away if China turned Christian but remained politically impotent.

But the outlook of individuals is not always the same as that of states; and there is no doubt that many Western people, who have been brought up in the traditional belief that truth and Christianity are practically synonymous terms, do sincerely regard themselves as entitled, on account of their Christianity, to assume a position of superiority in respect of the blundering heathen who walks in darkness. They have been so long accustomed to regard good morals as dependent on an acceptance of certain theological dogmas and formulas that they are inclined to doubt whether, apart from Christianity, there can be any sound morality at all. When they are faced by the awkward fact that the most outspoken disbelievers in the Christian faith are among the best, most unselfish, and high-

principled men of their acquaintance, they explain this strange fact by the theory that these well-behaved infidels are influenced by a Christian education or by Christian surroundings. A good example of this occurs in Professor Sanday's disappointing little pamphlet, *A New Marcion*, which professes to be, but is not, a criticism of a recent work by Mr. F. C. Conybeare in which the historical evidences of Christianity are ably and somewhat unsparingly dissected. "Of course," says the professor, "Mr. Conybeare is better than his creed. This is what constantly happens: a Christian upbringing tells, and the effects of it survive after it has been given up as theoretically untenable."[1] Similarly, Dr. Warschauer holds that if agnostics are good men, it is because willingly or unwillingly they have taken in Christian ideas through every pore.[2] The Bishop of Carpentaria (Dr. Gilbert White) delivers himself of the dictum that, "the level even of conventional Christianity is far higher than that of non-Christian life."[3] The Christian belief that only Christians can be good men, or that goodness can be derived only from Christianity, is sometimes narrowed still further into a belief that true righteousness can be justly ascribed only to the members of certain sects or subdivisions of Christianity. Protestants have been heard to denounce Catholics as emissaries of Satan,[4] and Catholics retort with the cheerful remark that nothing but the plea of "invincible ignorance" can save the unhappy Protestant heretics from eternal damnation. The pope, in his famous Encyclical Letter, *Pascendi Gregis*, feels obliged to admit that the Modernists, whom he is denouncing, "possess, as a rule, a reputation for irreproachable morality"; but

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
[2] *Anti-Nunquam*, p. 27.
[3] *The East and the West*, Jan., 1909, p. 17.
[4] See pp. 100, 156.

he takes care to explain that this fact is "well calculated to deceive souls."

The religious believer who holds that Christianity is directly or indirectly responsible for all the moral goodness that is to be found among men, not unnaturally recoils with horror and indignation from the infidel who expresses grave doubts, not only as to the fitness of Christianity to be the universal religion, but also as to its historical truth and its ethical soundness. The happiest memories of his childhood, to many a devout Christian, are associated with the simple prayers and hymns that he learned at the knees of a loved and loving mother. As soon would he doubt his mother's affection or virtue as call in question the truth of the Christian story as he heard it from her lips. If his thoughts turn to the days of boyhood and youth he will form a mental picture of the ivy-clad parish church under the shadow of which he was brought up, or his school chapel, or the beautiful cathedral in which the grandeur of the Christian ritual made its first strong appeal to his emotions and awakened his mind to the "beauty of holiness." Artists, poets, architects, musicians have lavished upon the external aspects of his religion all the resources of human genius, and have glorified the forms and symbols of his faith just as the saints and mystics have glorified its spiritual aspects. He not only believes but he *knows* that truth, clothed with beauty and mystery as with a garment, is revealed to him, in the word and in the spirit of the Christian religion.

If this be the way in which Christianity makes its appeal to one who has been brought up in a Christian land and amid Christian traditions, it is not strange that he should be amazed and indignant, and perhaps scornful, when he finds that the heathen seem deaf

to an appeal which to himself is irresistible. He does not realise, without great difficulty, that the average Oriental, whose emotional, religious, and intellectual interests are naturally those of his own race, cannot—even though he become a Christian convert—regard the religion of the Cross from the same point of view as his Western teachers or feel its attraction in the manner in which it is felt by them.

One thing that Western Christians often seem unable to understand is that to find favour with the educated and intelligent members of a heathen race it is absolutely necessary that Christianity should be presented to them in a form that will bear the closest critical scrutiny by the unprepossessed intellect. I do not, of course, mean that faith and reason may not have their separate provinces. For all I know to the contrary, faith may be able to grasp truths which are unattainable by the intellect alone. Yet it is not only unwise, it is also immoral, to lead the Chinese to suppose that the unverifiable dogmas or doctrines of the Christian faith are established on a basis of ascertained and indisputable truth. I have heard a missionary teaching a large Chinese class the usual Christian stories concerning the birth and childhood of Jesus. He spoke with fervour, and assured his ignorant listeners that what he was telling them was irrefragably true. Yet even so conservative a critic as Harnack admits that "the tradition as to the incidents attending the birth and early life of Jesus Christ has been shattered."

Some devout but candid Christians will admit that there are many elements of theological doctrine, and a considerable section of scriptural literature, which in their heart of hearts they would be glad to see lopped off the Christian tree. If they are opposed to any such mutilation at the present time, it is either because

they fear that the loping of a branch may endanger the life of the tree, or because they remember that the branch has been hung with the votive offerings of perhaps fifty generations of Christian saints and worshippers, and has therefore acquired a sanctity of its own which it would be sinful to violate. Let us suppose that the Athanasian Creed had not been discovered till the year of grace 1900. Would it have found a place, during the ten years that have since elapsed, in the Christian prayer-books? Would it have been accepted as a necessary part of the Church ritual? There can be only one answer to such questions. Even if its discovery (say in an Abyssinian tomb) had been accompanied by positive proofs that it was the genuine work of Athanasius himself, we may be quite sure that no one—not even those who are now bitterly protesting against the proposal to exclude it from the Anglican ritual—would hail it as a true and satisfying exposition of Christian doctrine or demand that its public recital be made a matter of ecclesiastical law.[1] Again, there can be little doubt that if such a thing as a revision of the Scriptures were conceivably possible, and if such revision could be carried out quietly and without attracting attention or arousing discussion, both the Old and the New Testaments would be subjected to some drastic alterations and some extensive omissions. From this process the Gospels would not be excepted. Judging from the trend of recent New Testament criticism it is not unlikely that the miracles ascribed to Jesus (except those of healing) as well as the nativity legends and the story of the bodily resurrection and ascension would vanish from the sacred records.

Speculation on these subjects is, of course, entirely

[1] See pp. 160–1.

useless, as the day has long gone by (though we now know that there once was such a day) when the Scriptures could be submitted to the tender mercies of a paste-and-scissors editor. But most students will admit that there is a great and growing divergence between the Christianity of the creeds and sacred books, and the Christianity that is with pain and difficulty extricating itself from the hands of historical and ethical criticism. With reference to this grave matter, there are two points to which I am anxious to draw attention. One is, that the process of "reconciling" scriptural error and theological inaccuracy with the facts established by critical research and scientific discovery is leading to insincerity, sophistry, and ambiguity of speech on the part of religious teachers, and to a pitiful condition of mental confusion on the part of honest Christian laymen, which must not only be disastrous in the long run to the cause of true religion and sound morals, but will seriously discredit the higher or spiritual side of Western civilisation in the eyes of keen Oriental observers. The other point is, that the Christianity which is being taught to the Chinese by the great bulk of missionaries to-day is not the Christianity that is accepted by cultivated and intelligent Christians of the present time in Europe and America, but represents a religious system which is morally defective, intellectually absurd, and historically untrue, and which has been discarded by capable theologians as well as by nearly all educated laymen in Western lands.[1]

[1] "Thoughtful men of to-day . . . are not asking themselves whether Jesus was 'God,' or 'omniscient,' or 'sinless,' or 'the ideal man.' These terms as applied to a human individual have no meaning to them . . . if the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are critically sifted and translated back into the Aramaic dialect Jesus spoke, it becomes evident that he never claimed to be, or showed any

The first point—the insincerity and ambiguity of modern Christian Apologetics—is becoming so widely recognised that even an Oriental may perhaps be pardoned for his presumption in referring to it. Mr. Sturt speaks of the "mental deterioration" that must result from the "habitual insincerity" and "divorce of language from meaning" that characterise much Christian exhortation of the present day.[1]

The fact of clerical insincerity [he says] is notorious; it is notorious that all our enlightened priests have ceased to accept in any natural sense the propositions to which they subscribed at ordination. . . . Although they recite the formula daily, they do not believe that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, or was born of a virgin, or descended into hell, or rose again the third day, or ascended into heaven, or will come thence to judge the quick and the dead.[2]

The Church of England, in spite of all its doctrinal compromises and its basis of English common-sense, is one of the worst offenders. Even the authorities of a rival organisation—the Church of Rome—have felt it their painful duty to upbraid the English clergy for "the vague and deceptive character of their language." Referring to the pronouncements of certain Anglican divines on the subject of the Real Presence and the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Catholic clergy ask why it is "that, capable men as they undoubtedly were, they should

desire to become, the Messiah, but that he included himself among the sons of men whom he looked upon as the sons of God, applying to himself all the laws he laid down for their life, only regarding himself as a prophet, a sower of the good seed in the world's great field."—Nathaniel Schmidt in *The International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1910, pp. 381–2. (It need hardly be said that scholars are still at variance over the Messiah question. See *The Idea of a Free Church*, by Henry Sturt, pp. 177–201.)

[1] *The Idea of a Free Church.* [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 263–4.

have been, one and all, so unable to expound their meaning in language of clear and unmistakable character?"[1] Can it be that the ambiguities and want of clarity are due to the desire to provide every theological position with gaps and loop-holes, through which escape may be made in the event of the positions becoming untenable? Another writer speaks of "that timorous and pitiable system of concessions and half-truths, than which nothing has tended more to discredit religion among serious thinkers."[2] No fair-minded man asks or expects Christian apologists to give us the whole essence of Christianity in a few lucid and comprehensive sentences. "Ces choses ne se disent pas succinctement," as Hegel said. But they should at least be able to express themselves in such a manner that no doubt can arise in any intelligent mind as to what they really mean. Christians may (or may not) have built their mansion upon a rock, but at any rate, as Paul Sabatier has said, they are constantly engaged in changing its furniture; and the changes are rapid enough to cause not only surprise, but bewilderment. The Christian religion, says Mr. St. George Stock, which "was once so boldly dogmatic, has become a kind of Proteus which, on your grasping it, evades you in a stream of pious phraseology."[3] Father George Tyrrell explained the present dearth of candidates for ordination in nearly every Christian body by the fact that "thoughtful and conscientious men" are hesitating "in these days of theological chaos to expose themselves even to the suspicion of laying

[1] *A Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicæ Curæ,"* by the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster, p. 116 (Longmans, Green & Co., 1898).

[2] *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1907, pp. 496–7.

[3] *Ibid.*, Jan., 1909, p. 453.

fetters on their inward freedom, not to speak of the real danger to their perfect veracity and candour." Men and women, he said, are "still keenly and wistfully interested in religious questions; but when they turn to the professed defenders of religion they find them tied by solemn obligations to certain methods and conclusions, and incapable of dealing freely with minds whose interest is in truth, and not in this or that truth."[1] There are a few clear-minded Anglican clergy who have expressed themselves with no less candour. "It is not just indifference or self-indulgence," says the Rev. S. A. Barnett, "which alienates the people from church or chapel or mission; it is the insincerity or inconsistency which they themselves have learned to detect."[2] These are strong words from a canon of Westminster Abbey.

Most unhesitatingly do I believe that the shufflings and ambiguities of modern Christian Apologetics will have a terribly chilling effect on the welcome which an awakened China will accord to the religious constituents or accompaniments of Western civilisation. If, so far as the relations between East and West are concerned, this matter of clerical insincerity is not at the present moment a very urgent one, this is only because the Christianity which is being promulgated by missionaries in China to-day is a Christianity that is sublimely ignorant, or at least contemptuous, of the results actually attained or reasonably anticipated by advanced exponents of the higher criticism, and consequently it is a Christianity that makes little or no use of modern apologetic arguments. Very few Chinese converts have any knowledge of the grim warfare that is at present being waged in the West on theological battle-

[1] *Contemporary Review*, May, 1909, pp. 580, 582.
[2] *The Hibbert Journal*, July, 1907, p. 881.

fields, and only an infinitesimal fraction of such converts have the slightest conception of the nature of the weapons with which the attack and defence are conducted and the manner in which the champions of orthodoxy are in the habit of defending their threatened positions.

But this brings me to the second point to which I desire to draw attention. A Christianity that is decaying or has become obsolete in the West among all thinking persons (clergy as well as laity), a Christianity that is to a great extent palpably untrue, that is full of idle and mischievous superstitions, that is ethically impracticable, is still regarded as suitable religious pabulum for an awakening China that is no nation of low-browed savages, but one which expects at no distant date to take an honourable place in the front rank of the progressive peoples of the world. This is a state of things which most emphatically should not be allowed to continue.

The position in China at present is a peculiar one. So far as the material developments of Western civilisation are concerned we are being provided with the newest and best results attained by modern science; but in respect of the religious developments of the West we are being spoon-fed with a theology from which all nourishment—if it ever contained any—has been withdrawn. It is "very much to be desired," as the Rev. Dr. Rashdall has said, "that things which educated men are ceasing to believe at home should no longer be taught to the heathen abroad."[1] If I go to a European lecturer on physiology, will he teach

[1] "The Motive of Modern Missionary Work," in *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1907, p. 380. Would that some hundreds or thousands of Christian missionaries in China could be replaced by as many Dr. Rashdalls!

me Wolff's theory of embryology, which the learned world accepted in the eighteenth century and has long given up, or will he give me the latest and best theories at his disposal? Surely he will not, because I am a Chinese, load me with old-fashioned and obsolete science on the ground that what was good enough for his great-grandfather ought to be good enough for me? If I enter a Western university, shall I be taught alchemy instead of chemistry, astrology instead of astronomy? If I pay a visit to a modern observatory, shall I be told that the sun goes round the earth, because, forsooth, the astronomer's ancestors believed it? If you have outgrown your old belief in the story of the fall of man, is it really necessary that, before we Chinese can hope to reach the religious heights you have since attained, we in our turn must go through a belief in the same fable? If you have surrendered your faith in the Joshua sun-miracle, or the whale-and-Jonah legend, or the virgin-birth of Christ, or the blasting of the fig-tree, or the story of the Gadarene swine, can it be really essential that we Chinese should enter upon our Christian novitiate by accepting all these things as true?[1] I grant that in most cases missionaries do themselves believe in the crude theology which they teach in China, and that they are, in fact, giving us the best that they know and the Christianity that they believe to be true, but this brings meagre consolation to those of us who understand that the Chinese are being fed with inferior philosophy, unpractical ethics, and witless superstitions, and that folklore and old-world myths (pleasing and picturesque enough if treated as such) are being

[1] It is rather curious that *in the first century* of the Christian era we Chinese had a philosopher (Wang Ch'ung) who warned us against putting credulous trust in stories of virgin-births and similar prodigies.

palmed off on our people as divine revelation and historical truth.

Remember, we Chinese have no sentimental clinging to the Christianity of the Bible and the creeds. In your country you must, perhaps, "go slow," as the saying is, because you must be merciful to tender consciences and must abstain from tearing up people's religious beliefs by the roots. You need have no such fear in China: the roots are not in us. The fact that the Chinese know nothing of your religion does not justify Christian missionaries in teaching them a Christianity that cultured men among yourselves have discarded; on the contrary, it should make them all the more scrupulously careful to teach nothing whatever but what will stand all the criticism that the scientific, historical, philosophical, ethical, and biblical learning of the present and past days has brought to bear on theological and christological problems.

The question of the doctrines that should be taught to Christian converts is, of course, recognised as a serious and important one by missionaries of the highly-cultured class with which this Appeal has only an indirect concern. It is recognised as such, for instance, by the Rev. J. W. Burton, a member of the Australian Methodist Missionary Society in Fiji, who says that the doctrinal question is "daily becoming more urgent." He sees clearly that if you teach the Chinese an obsolete Christianity, the day must come when you will be obliged—unless you are prepared to face their total and final rejection of your religion—to teach them to *unlearn* a great deal that has already been laboriously taught.

The position to be assigned to the Old Testament [he

says] is a case in point. Should we lead a non-Christian people through the wilderness of Jewish tradition and Semitic ideas? Should we ask a people weaker in the faith than ourselves to make those adjustments in religious thought which our early training has made necessary to us? The most dangerous trial of faith is that of *un*learning. Shall we put this strain upon them?[1]

What the present religious condition demands, says another recent writer,

is no longer "concessions" to science, but an honest renovation of the whole religious system in the light of scientific knowledge. It is no use trying to twist facts to suit theories derived from a past which was destitute of the knowledge we now possess; what we have to do is to adjust our theories to suit the facts. Half-a-century ago evolution was unproven, and biblical criticism was in a tentative and conjectural stage; in politics the Temporal Power still held Rome for absolutism, and democracy was suffering from a partial check. To-day, evolution, the great results of biblical criticism, and democracy are all acknowledged facts, and in the light of them the need for religious reconstruction is patent and indisputable.[2]

[1] "Christian Missions as Affected by Liberal Theology," in *The Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1909, p. 412. The same writer makes the following significant admission, which, if it came from one who was not a missionary, would be denounced forthwith as a gross misstatement. "In spite of the dramatic and enthusiastic utterances of the class usually associated, rightly or wrongly, with 'Exeter Hall,' Foreign Missions have not been the success they might reasonably have been expected to be, when the enormous expenditure of life and wealth is considered. This fact is admitted—privately, of course—by those who are in a position to judge. It is not the criticism of the unsympathetic, but the sigh of the disappointed. The successes are, as a rule, trumpeted abroad, the failures are discreetly hidden away. We hear much on missionary platforms of the faithfulness and devotion of converts; but there is another side—and it is to be feared the larger side—the instability, the unfaithfulness, and the greed of those who have been won."—*Ibid.*, pp. 408–9.

[2] *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1907, pp. 497, 510–11. *Cf.* an inter-

Now, is it fair to press on the people of China a Christianity that is in the distracted condition in which we find it to-day? Will you not at least spare us the pain of having to learn much that you yourselves admit we may have to unlearn fifty, twenty, or even five years hence? May we not appeal to you to make up your own minds about what is true and what is not true in Christianity before you ask us to exchange for it the old faiths and ideals of our own race? If you wish to invite us into your citadel in order that we may find shelter there from warring creeds and clashing philosophies, are we not entitled to ask you, before we enter, whether you have made your citadel strong and impregnable?

Perhaps you think still—you certainly once thought—that our heathen religions and ethics are so hopelessly vile and corrupt that Christianity, in whatever shape or form, must be brought in to replace them. But we Chinese are not Central African or Polynesian savages. You may, if you will, send out trousers and Bibles to such races as these, because they have neither clothes nor sacred books of their own; but we Chinese are not in this unhappy state of physical and moral nakedness. Not only have we an ethical

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esting article in the same journal, October, 1908, entitled "Evangelical Bargaining," by John Page Hopps. The article deals with certain recent attempts at compromise between the orthodox and advanced theologies. The author comments on the "naïve and illuminating confession" of the evangelical Churches that "the premises are being rebuilt but the business must be carried on"; hence the invitation to "capable middle-men" to act as mediators "between the learned and the public," and keep people quiet and comfortable in an intermediate stage of religious faith which will be neither too advanced for old-fashioned believers nor too backward for those who know something of the results of the higher criticism. "In fact," says Mr. Hopps, "it is the part of 'the capable middle-man' to persuade the customers that there is a great change and yet that it all comes to the same thing."

and religious literature which we believe to be comparable with any other, but many of us have access, also, to all the literary treasures of the West. A missionary who faces a large promiscuous audience in a Chinese city can no longer be sure that he is addressing an ignorant and gaping mob, or that his only educated listeners are those who are learned in the Confucian classics. It is not impossible that among his audience may be men who are acquainted with Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel, and who read with keen interest the publications of the rationalist press and the works of Western philosophers whom the average missionary would describe as infidel, agnostic, or atheistic. What will the unlettered Christian missionary do with a Chinese who has read Hume, or Spencer, or McTaggart, or Bradley, or Nietzsche and *Der Antichrist*, and is prepared to discuss them with him? Bishop Colenso, as we all know, was so puzzled by the searching questions put to him by his African disciples and inquirers that he himself became a sort of convert to his own converts, and adopted biblical views which, though regarded as harmless and in some respects old-fashioned to-day, were at that time frowned upon as dangerously heretical. But what is to become of a new Colenso in China who is called upon to reply to the criticisms of a Loisy, or a Conybeare, or a Sturt?

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the Chinese do not want Europe's cast-off theology, and if you insist upon thrusting it on them it is not unlikely that there will some day be a terrible reaction, resulting in the definite expulsion from China of all Western religion. By no means do I desire to see all religious impulses stifled in China. I am not one of those who believe that the day for religion of any and every kind is for ever passed away. George Tyrrell was perhaps

right when he declared that "spiritual religion, far from being outgrown like a toy, becomes more and more of an exigency with the deepening of man's moral and spiritual life." But if the acceptance of Christianity necessitates the sacrifice of sincerity and truth, I, for one, shall rejoice to see China adopt a religion that is not Christian and is not inconsistent with perfect honesty of thought and speech. I cannot see that man's moral or spiritual life is likely to derive permanent benefit from a faith in dogmas which are either repugnant to the reason, and, therefore, morally mischievous, or which can be reconciled with truth only by a distortion of language and by theological jugglery. Western thinkers are beginning to urge the formulation of a scientific religion that shall be consistent with itself and in harmony with modern thought.[1] Whether there be any form of Christianity that by further distortion or manipulation can be made to fulfil such conditions is a question that I am in no way qualified to answer; but I may be allowed to express the hope and belief that no form of Western religion irreconcilable with those conditions will find a permanent home on Chinese soil.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Prof. Beth's *Die Moderne und die Prinzipien der Theologie* (Trowitzsch, 1907). Mr. Sturt's proposed Free Church would not, of course, be a Christian Church. If he can arrange to send some missionaries to China to promulgate the religious ideas adumbrated by him, I am inclined to think they will meet with no small measure of success.

[2] For further observations on this subject, *see below*, pp. 304–307.

CHAPTER III

MISSIONARIES AND THEIR METHODS

BEFORE proceeding to give examples of what I believe to be the mistaken methods of missionaries, it is necessary to reiterate a warning that I have no wish to bring an indictment against the whole body of missionaries, but only against a section of them which is numerically very powerful. I am glad to admit that there are also some educated and cultivated missionaries who invariably behave with the same tact and courtesy in a heathen land that they would exercise among the people of their own country; who take the utmost care never to abuse their position as guests of the Chinese nation; who never offend native religious prejudices and never dream of interfering with established social usages; who, in short, are never guilty of a breach of that unwritten and undefinable code of good manners, the observance of which always enables gentlemen, whatever land they belong to and whatever language they speak, to meet on terms of sympathy and equality. Against such missionaries as these—whose presence in China will always be welcomed even if we reject the dogmas of their religion —I have no wish to bring a complaint. If one does not often hear missionaries of this excellent but exceptional type speaking with easy familiarity of the Deity,[1] or if their utterances are not constantly inter-

[1] Observations of this kind are painfully frequent in missionary

larded with references to "blessing," "spiritual uplift," "agony," and other stock phrases dear to the heart of their less-cultivated brethren in religion,[1] and if their church services are marked by a quiet reverence and decorum which to a revivalist would betoken a chilling absence of godly fervour, if not the actual presence of the Devil,[2] they at least give the Chinese endless opportunities of forming an acquaintance with the graces and harmonies that characterise the highest type of Christian lives and homes, and supply the officials and educated classes of China with sufficient proof that Western civilisation at its best is not necessarily aggressive and truculent in the material concerns

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periodicals. "At noon the Lord definitely gave Mrs. Green this promise: 'His going forth is sure as the morning'; and later we found that He had given the same to Mr. Goforth also" (*China's Millions*, March, 1909, pp. 38–9). The reference was to the expected spiritual "going forth" at one of Mr. Goforth's revival meetings; but one may perhaps be allowed to express surprise that feelings of reverence did not impel the lady to suppress the Lord's not very subtle pun on the name of her reverend colleague.

[1] "We have been greatly cheered by hearing from Mr. Meadows of *marked blessing* at the recent conference at Shashingfu. Pastor Ren, of Hangchow, appears to have received a *spiritual uplift* at the time, and his preaching was *in much power*. . . . Sins of almost every name were confessed, in some cases with deep *agony* and loud weeping" (*China's Millions*, March, 1909, p. 37. Italics not in original). The words "agony" and "agonise" occur seven times in twelve lines in a printed address reported in *China's Millions* of August, 1909 (p. 116). We are there informed that the process of "agony" is one to which God himself is at times subjected.

[2] A missionary prayer-meeting is described as follows: "The hush of God came down upon the people, but the Devil was raging. During the first few days many prayed who were not led of the Spirit, just the ordinary commonplace prayers, and we felt strongly that this was one of the tactics of the Evil One" (*China's Millions*, March. 1909, p. 38). Thus we see not only that the Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose, a thing we all knew long ago, but that he can also win souls for hell by teaching them an erroneous method of prayer!

of life, and not necessarily bigoted and hysterical in matters spiritual.

There is a distinct line of cleavage between the two principal missionary types. On the one side we have what we may call the decorous type; on the other side a type that sometimes may be not unfittingly described as the corybantic. The cleavage extends not only to methods of proselytism but even to private devotions, and to household management and mural decoration: for indeed a peep at the inside walls of a missionary's private house will almost infallibly enable an experienced visitor to form an accurate idea of the type to which his host belongs.

An English official who has travelled much in the interior of China informs me that at one time he always made a point of calling upon the missionaries in the various towns and villages he passed through, not for the sake of religious edification, but merely from motives of ordinary courtesy. Latterly, however, he has been obliged to desist altogether (except in special cases) from intruding upon missionary establishments, owing to the disagreeable frequency with which he has found himself faced by the choice either of being guilty of apparent discourtesy to his well-meaning hosts or of taking a hypocritical part in pious conversations and religious exercises. On one occasion his badly-concealed reluctance to accept without question the supposed proofs of some miracles alleged to have been wrought by the Deity in a certain locality in China induced his host to offer up special prayers, in which the whole company audibly joined, that my friend "might be reconciled to his Maker."[1]

[1] The well-meant practice of praying for or at people is sometimes found to be an embarrassing one even in heathen China. There was a woman, we are told, who was being prepared for baptism, but who

On another occasion the same Englishman climbed to the top of one of the grandest mountains in China, and in a Taoist temple near the summit he found a group of Protestant missionaries, who in this cool and salubrious retreat were spending the hot months of a mid-China summer. My friend put up for the night in the same temple, and on the following morning one of the missionaries accompanied him on a short ramble. The missionary spoke highly of the mountain as a healthy summer resort, but seemed strangely cold to the magnificence of the scenery. Having steered my friend into a grotto, from which escape was impossible, he suddenly addressed him with the remark, "Are you a lover of the Lord Jesus?" My friend's first impulse was to answer that at any rate he loved intensely everything that was beautiful, but knowing by instinct that his interlocutor would not understand such a remark, he merely gave a vague reply to the effect that he never discussed his religious feelings except with his personal friends. It seemed to him that the missionary's question was appropriate neither to the time nor to the occasion, and he would have thought more highly of the man, even as a professional preacher of the Christian gospel, if he had wholly yielded himself, just for that hour, to a frank appreciation of the loveliness that lay around him.

But the relations between Western missionaries and their own countrymen need not concern us here.

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had not yet succeeded in passing the very mild theological examination which was a necessary preliminary to Church membership. She put her failure down to the fact that her heart was vexed. "I asked her," writes a missionary, "what it was that had vexed her. She replied that in their village prayer-meeting *the Christians all prayed at her*" (*China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 29). It would be interesting to observe the effect of the introduction of this amiable custom into a few of the fashionable churches of London and New York.

More important is it to consider the methods adopted by missionaries with a view to imparting to the Chinese their conceptions of the Christian religion and Western civilisation. There is, as every one knows, a rapidly growing eagerness among the Chinese to acquire a knowledge of Western science—not, indeed, because they have any love for the West or for all Western ideals, but because they now realise that a mastery of scientific knowledge and methods is, in these days of stupendous armaments, incessant national rivalries, and economic competition, a necessary preliminary to the attainment of material prosperity and political strength. Properly-equipped schools and colleges are still very few in number, and for the great bulk of the people the only possible means of acquiring even the merest smattering of Western knowledge is by attendance at mission schools. Now, as many missionary teachers and lecturers are mainly interested in the evangelical side of their labours and only indirectly in secular education,[1] it is not surprising that

[1] In proof of this I quote from the authoritative Appeal for Evangelistic Workers issued by the China Centenary Missionary Conference, and published in *China's Millions*, September, 1909, p. 135: "No one can question the importance of the work done by those engaged in the medical, educational, literary, and philanthropic branches of our great missionary enterprise; but we would impress upon the home Churches the fact that the time has come when direct evangelism must be given the first place. Less than one half of the whole missionary staff in China is now engaged in this direct evangelistic work, and even this proportion, in itself far too small, is due mainly to the importance which the China Inland Mission places upon evangelistic as compared with institutional work." The following is from an article in *The Chinese Recorder* of March, 1910, pp. 202 *seq.*:

> "Missionaries have told me that they did not believe in itinerating work; there were very few results from it; and it was their opinion that the conversion of China's millions to Christ would be brought about by educational work. We all appreciate the valuable work done by our brethren in the Christian schools, but I feel perfectly

they regard their scientific instruments as a kind of bait to attract those who would otherwise never enter a missionary building and never hear a word of the gospel; and they take care that the man who is taught something about a steam engine or an electric battery is not allowed to go away until he has also imbibed some knowledge of the "saving grace" of Christ. An excellent example of how these things are arranged is afforded by an account, now before me, of the methods pursued by a missionary in the far western province of Ssŭch'uan.

Our first step was this: We had a small unoccupied ward, two sides of which we fitted up with tables and spread out upon them a few pieces of scientific apparatus, many connected with chemistry and electricity. We made no effort to make this known, but since that place was opened we have never had a day but what we had educated people come in. In increasing numbers they came day by day, and week by week It was a very blessed thing, after we had satisfied their curiosity, to ask them to sit down and then to change the topic and in a quiet way preach the gospel to these people, who, but for the science room, would certainly never have come within hearing of it. It very soon seemed to us that the Lord was prospering this work, and that He would have us continue it.[1]

The rest of the paper is of the highest interest as showing the enthusiasm with which the students threw them-

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sure that they themselves would agree with me in this, that they are touching a very small and select class of the Chinese only. This problem is not being, and cannot be, solved by the Christian educational work.

". . . The time has come in China when all the missions should unite in a great effort for the thorough evangelisation of the masses in China, and in no branch of missionary enterprise is there a grander opportunity for union than in this."

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 91.

selves into the pursuit of scientific knowledge; but what I wish to emphasise here is the deft manner in which religious teaching was interwoven with technical instruction.

We were gaining a glorious opportunity [says our chronicler] of preaching the gospel to these people to whom we had never spoken it before. They came to our house and lived with us. When they were too many for us to accommodate, we hired a temple close by capable of accommodating forty or fifty students. Every day we assembled for morning prayer at half-past seven. They heard the Bible read and expounded. They saw us praying to God, the unseen Jehovah. A sight, this, with which they were utterly unfamiliar. Day by day, not merely once or twice, but during the whole course of the six weeks, would they come into contact with the truth as it is in Jesus.

Then, with regard to Sundays, it was a grand thing to tell them on Saturday afternoon: "To-morrow there will be no lecture. It is our worship day. Come to the church." And men who had never been into a church or a chapel before would all come and sit quietly and attentively throughout the service. Then on Sunday afternoons I tried to have a special effort suited to their particular requirements. But perhaps the best influence exercised was in the evenings when, the work of the day being over, I had an opportunity of going into their rooms, after they had had tea, and talking with them. They would all be diligently at work writing out notes of what they had heard during the day, making diagrams of the apparatus which they had seen, and discussing with one and another the whole matter. I would go and sit down amongst them and enter into these problems which are so interesting and then would gradually lead them on again to the one great theme, the truth as it is in Jesus.[1]

Now my object in quoting these passages is assuredly

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 92.

not to find fault either with this writer's methods or with the manner in which he describes them. On the contrary, I am of opinion that the missionary who devised this scheme (Dr. William Wilson) proved himself to be a man deserving of all gratitude and honour. Even those of us who do not share his faith in the religious doctrines which to him doubtless constitute the very essence of truth and beauty, will not withhold our little tribute of respect and admiration for the patience, industry, and goodness of heart which enabled him to carry out his self-imposed task. But a careful perusal of the paper from which the above passages are taken brings out a feature of interest that might perhaps escape the notice of those who are not well acquainted with the Chinese character. Most Europeans who have lived long in China are willing to grant that the Chinese, in their ordinary social intercourse, are remarkable for their patience, tolerance, and courtesy. Missionaries often admit this as freely as it is admitted by other foreigners. One such missionary, alluding to the readiness with which the Chinese male adult in his own house attends to the wishes of the foreign lady-missionaries who visit his women-folk, remarks that "the Chinese of almost any class have an innate good breeding which compels them to listen to courteous requests."[1] Now there is nothing in Dr. Wilson's paper to give the uninformed reader any indication of how it was that these crowds of eager students, who had gathered together for the express purpose of hearing scientific lectures, were willing to listen patiently to the religious discourses that followed or preceded those lectures. I venture to suggest that some credit might have been given to these Chinese students for their courteous readiness

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Feb., 1909, p. 75.

to comply with what they knew to be the earnest wishes of their foreign teachers. I do not for a moment deny that on the part of many of the students there may have been some curiosity to hear a first-hand exposition of the foreign religion of which they had doubtless received many garbled accounts, and in certain cases a genuine interest in some features of the new doctrine may have been temporarily or permanently aroused. But the mere fact that the scriptural lessons failed to make a single Christian convert (for a conversion, if it had taken place, would hardly have been left unchronicled) surely justifies us in suggesting that what made these young men such quiet and willing attendants at Christian prayer-meetings may well have been the promptings of their own gentlemanly feelings of courteous respect toward those from whom they were receiving valuable lessons in modern science. In other words, they (or the majority of them) listened to the gospel because they discovered that by so doing they would give great pleasure to their foreign teachers, and they adopted this means of showing their good-will and gratitude. Of course, no missionary can be expected to look on the matter in this light: from his point of view, a chance of hearing the "good news" must be, to the benighted heathen, a priceless and joyous privilege; and the idea that his students are making martyrs of themselves, so to speak, merely through their chivalrous respect for his feelings, will appear to him foolish and extravagant. Yet I think most Europeans who are not themselves missionaries but have a good knowledge of the Chinese character will agree that this explanation of the matter is not altogether unreasonable.

Though Dr. Wilson's elaborate plan for the propagation of Christianity among the student-class may

in some cases have put a rather severe tax on the patience and temper of those of the students whom the Christian religion wholly failed to attract, there is no reason to regard the method as in any way offensive to Chinese susceptibilities or as likely to cause any ill-feeling toward foreigners. Unfortunately, Christian missionaries have not always adopted such harmless tactics as these. It would be impossible to estimate the number of Chinese who have become nominal Christians either as a simple means of earning foreign money[1] or in order to obtain foreign support in village quarrels or in lawsuits. I do not wish to lay undue

[1] The following significant passage occurs in *The Chinese Recorder* of March, 1910 (p. 209):

"A very serious hindrance to this work [*i. e.*, the evangelisation of the Chinese masses] is the unworthy character of many of the Chinese now engaged in it. It is most natural for missionaries to desire all the Chinese help they can get, but this has too often led to the employment of very questionable men. . . . I heard a dear Chinese brother say not long ago that of the more than 200,000 professing Christians in China a very large number were still unregenerate, and of the already large army of Chinese workers very many knew nothing of the new birth.

"I was once asked by a missionary brother going on furlough to take the oversight of his four colporteurs. I did not continue these men in work for more than a month, for instead of going the trip I had mapped out for them they threw their books into the river and spent their days in a neighbouring city in idleness and gambling. Their sales had averaged so very little that it paid them to do this.

"A missionary travelling on a passenger boat overheard a conversation between two Chinese on the subject of the price of a Church membership certificate, and it was all too conclusive that in a certain city (the name of which was given) a regular trade in membership certificates was carried on by the Chinese evangelist in charge.

"One day a man called to see me in Yangchow, and wished my assistance in the recovery of certain articles of clothing, which he said had been stolen from him in the lodging-house where he had spent the night. The man was a colporteur employed by a missionary in another city, and I afterwards found out that the place he had lost his clothes in was a brothel."

emphasis on this matter, for the missionaries themselves are now generally ready to admit that intervention in Chinese lawsuits is a practice that ought to be strictly avoided, and some societies absolutely forbid their missionaries to interfere in any way with the proceedings in Chinese courts. That such intervention was once very frequent—especially on the part of the Catholics—is not, I believe, denied by any one who is in a position to know the facts. The plea that intervention takes place only when a magistrate has given an unfair decision, or when a Christian convert has been treated with manifest injustice, is quite unsatisfactory: for in the first place missionaries are aliens in China and therefore have no authority whatever to interfere in matters solely affecting Chinese subjects; and in the second place they have no moral or official right to constitute themselves judges of the merits of cases of which they have usually only a one-sided knowledge and in which they are practically certain to have a strong bias in favour of their own converts. As a rule, they hear only the Christian's version of the disputed issue; indeed they generally have no opportunity of hearing any other version, however willing they may be to hear all that can be said on both sides. Even if the statements of both parties are placed before them, they are strongly inclined to accept the evidence of their convert. He, as a Christian, is supposed to be incapable of bearing false witness, whereas his opponent, being a heathen, is the slave and instrument of the Father of Lies.

In South China, where clan-fights are frequent, it was till recently no uncommon thing for a whole village to present itself for baptism in order that it might have foreign support in carrying on its feud against a neighbouring village. To the credit of the Protestant

missionaries be it said that they have not encouraged this system of baptism *en masse;* and it is perhaps needless to say that neither Catholics nor Protestants have deliberately acted as the protectors of criminals.[1] Some years ago a band of ruffians in the Kuangtung province presented themselves at three separate mission stations in turn, and expressed their deep sense of sin and their keen desire to be enrolled among the elect. The three missionary communities belonged to three different Christian denominations, but fortunately their rivalry did not blind them to the notoriously bad character of these applicants for baptism, who, much to their own surprise and disgust, found themselves gently but firmly rejected. Not to be baffled, this enterprising band of rogues invented a new religious organisation for themselves, which they thought would give them all the political advantages of Christianity without involving them in any of its corresponding social disabilities. The name they selected for their organisation was *The Confucian-Jesus Society*, and under the shelter of this imposing designation they proceeded to grow rich if not virtuous.

[1] "In many parts of China there have been and still are a considerable number of people who are wishing to join the Church in order to obtain her influence in their disputes and law-cases" (*China's Millions*, Sept., 1909, p. 131). Writing of conditions at Tungchow in 1905, a missionary says: "Four of the five Christians there had gone back to opium-smoking, and the other was hardly worth calling a Christian, as he was meddling in lawsuits and making money behind our back" (*China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 102). So much for Tungchow! In the course of a lecture at the International Institute at Shanghai (reported in *The North China Herald* of Dec. 1, 1905, p. 495), Dr. Gilbert Reid referred to the fact that in Japan, for many years past, there had not only been no missionary difficulties "but no interference in Japanese lawsuits. Japanese Christians seemed satisfied with their own officials." Perhaps it is just as well; they would certainly get no other. The naïve admission of the practicability of missionary interference in lawsuits is very significant.

The association prospered exceedingly for a short space of time and made many "converts." It might have flourished to this day but for the unhappy circumstance that two of the principal office-bearers were convicted of highway robbery and executed.

It is not in cases like this that missionaries are likely to be deceived: but from their own admissions it is clear that they have often unknowingly admitted to the fold cunning hypocrites whose only motive in joining the Christian fraternity was to escape the penalties of crime or to secure foreign support in litigation. European writers on China, who very rarely have a good word to say for Chinese officials, have perhaps never realised the enormous difficulties and perplexities that often beset even an honest and well-intentioned official who has the misfortune to be stationed in a litigious district where Christian converts happen to be numerous. On the one hand the official has received the strictest instructions from his Government that one of his principal duties is to avoid all disputes with missionaries that may (so long as China is politically weak) lead to international trouble, and on the other hand he is naturally averse from allowing aliens who have no official status, and no authority recognised either by Chinese or by international law, to dictate to him the manner in which he is to decide cases that directly or indirectly concern native Christians. Yet he can never be quite certain that a dispute with a missionary will not lead either to his own shameful humiliation or to a political crisis which may involve his country in war and in which he himself is sure to be made the chief scapegoat. The story of how these things come about has been repeated so often that there is scarcely a responsible official in China who does not know it by heart; and many are the ex-

officials who in the solitude of their forced retirement and amid the cold ashes of their hopes and ambitions most bitterly repent that they ever for a moment allowed the pitiful story to fade from their memory. There is a quarrel between convert and heathen and finally between missionary and magistrate; a whisper of foreign intervention and aggression reaches the streets and market-places; there is a popular tumult in which the missionary is killed; the minister of the nation to which he belongs demands a cash indemnity, the dismissal of the magistrate from the Government service, the re-building of the ruined mission buildings, the execution of a few of the rioters, and perhaps a mining or territorial concession or the opening of a few more treaty ports. All these demands are reluctantly yielded by China, who is not in a position to struggle against the bellicose and arrogant Christian Powers of Europe—*just yet.*

Not long ago I called on a Chinese official in order to congratulate him on the announcement of his transfer to a rich and prosperous district near one of the largest cities in China. The post which he was about to vacate was one of the poorest in the province. To my surprise I found him in a very lugubrious frame of mind, and he received my congratulations dolefully. "In this place," he said, "the people are well behaved, the country is quiet, and the only foreigner who came here in my time went away in two days. In the district where I am going there are fourteen missionaries. I do not ask for your congratulations; I should be glad of your sympathy." It need hardly be said that the possibilities of friction between missionaries and officials are now gradually diminishing. The French Government has withdrawn its official support from the Catholic propaganda, and as the rest of the Western

Powers seem sincerely anxious at present to avoid unnecessary quarrels with China, they strongly discourage their missionaries from interference with legal proceedings in the Chinese courts. A large proportion of the missionaries now in China, moreover, are engaged in educational and medical work, and these men—especially if they will keep their evangelistic zeal under careful control—are now received with marks of friendship in a very large number of towns and districts. Chinese officials are well aware, however, that the missionary danger is only quiescent.[1] The hasty self-confidence, perhaps the mistaken patriotism, of an unwary official, or the proselytising energy, perhaps the misdirected benevolence, of a rash missionary, might anywhere and at any moment cause the danger once more to become formidable; and it is to be feared that so long as China is politically weak, and so long as extraterritorial jurisdiction is maintained, it will always continue to hang like a thunder-cloud in the political firmament. It may be urged—it has often been urged—that no missionary would dream of interfering with the Chinese judicial administration if the magistrate would always dispense even-handed justice. That is very likely true. But in practice we find that it is the missionary who arrogates to himself the right of deciding whether in any particular instance a just decision has or has not been given. I do not for a moment wish to deny that there are abuses in the existing judicial system of China which call for drastic reform, but it is necessary to reiterate the undeniable fact that few missionaries—if any—possess the training, the experience, the knowledge of Chinese law and custom, the insight into Chinese character, which would justify them in positively asserting that a Chinese

[1] With reference to the riots at Changsha, April, 1910, see pp. 206 *seq.*

magistrate has in any given instance decided a case unjustly. Even if a missionary possessed all the qualifications of a Solomon he would still, almost invariably, be in the disadvantageous position of knowing the arguments only of one side of the case. Moreover, if he feels justified in accusing the magistrate of prejudice against Christians, is there not just the ghost of a fear that the missionary himself may justifiably be regarded as slightly prejudiced against the heathen?

CHAPTER IV

MISSIONARY MOTIVES, THE CHINESE CHARACTER, AND THE ATTITUDE OF YOUNG CHINA

MOST good Christians who support foreign missions, and the majority of missionaries themselves, feel that they need look for no further justification of their action than the alleged commands of their Master. "We preach to the heathen because the Lord bade us do so" is regarded as conclusive. Will such speakers deny that the alleged command is, to say the least, of doubtful genuineness? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[1] This is definite enough, but are missionaries who triumphantly quote these texts always careful to add (in case injury is done to the cause of truth) that in the opinion of the best modern scholars the whole of the twelve last verses of Mark (xvi., 9–20) are a late addition to the original and replaced a former ending that was lost or transferred to another Gospel?[2] The

[1] Mark xvi., 15–16.

[2] Even those who do not profess to be theologians may justifiably feel that to attribute verse 16 to the humane Jesus is to insult him. Moreover, the last twelve verses of Mark deal with post-resurrection occurrences; and any words put into Christ's mouth after his alleged revival from death can only be regarded with the gravest suspicion. I think I may say with confidence that Chinese students who, without bias for or against Christianity, have carefully studied the evidence

injunction to baptise occurs also in the last two verses of the Gospel ascribed to Matthew. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[1] Of these words a great theologian (the Rev. Dr. Rashdall, of Oxford) observes that unfortunately they are

among the most disputed of all the sayings attributed to our Lord in the Synoptic Gospels. Even if they form part of the true text of the present Gospel of Matthew, their historical character is open to grave suspicion. . . . This particular saying is open to objections on two grounds. In the first place, there is the general doubt whether our Lord contemplated definitely a mission to all the world.

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for the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus, do not merely regard it as hopelessly and even absurdly inadequate, but can scarcely bring themselves to believe that educated men in the West are really speaking honestly and without mental reservations when they pronounce the evidence to be satisfactory and conclusive. There are ample signs that the bodily-resurrection fable, though long left on a pedestal by itself, is now gradually and cautiously being treated with the refining and spiritualising process through which so many other crude Christian beliefs have passed on their way to "reconciliation" with truth. (I am not referring merely to the peculiar methods of the Modernists, who seem to hold that an alleged historical event, though proved to be false in fact, may yet remain true for faith.) Few competent theologians of to-day will now venture to repeat the confident assertion of Bishop Courtenay (who published his views slightly over fifty years ago) that the resurrection of Jesus "is more authentically attested than any other fact in history." Among recent works dealing with the evidence for the resurrection I may cite those with which a considerable number of Chinese students are familiar: Alfred Loisy's *L'Evangile et l'Église, Autour d'un Petit Livre*, etc.; Paul Le Breton's *La Résurrection du Christ;* C. T. Gorham's *The First Easter Dawn;* F. C. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals;* Henry Sturt's *The Idea of a Free Church* (esp. pp. 225–7); Kirsopp Lake's *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

[1] Matthew xxviii., 19–20.

. . . Secondly, there is the doubt attaching to all recorded sayings of the risen Christ. . . . *The truth is that no one who has realised the actual effect of critical research into the process by which the Gosepls came into their present form can any longer rest an important practical duty exclusively upon any single or isolated saying of our Lord.*[1]

Now it is hardly necessary to say that the results of the higher criticism are left severely and scornfully alone by missionaries of the class dealt with in these pages. The possibility of biblical interpolations and pious forgeries on the part of the early Christians does not cause them the least perturbation. Is not the entire Bible from cover to cover the inspired Word of God? Is it conceivable that God's own Book can contain errors? If God chose in his love and mercy to grant a divine revelation to his people, how can it be admitted for a moment that he has allowed human hands and minds to tamper with the written records in which that revelation is contained?

Even if this class of missionary were willing to admit the vast difference which science, criticism, and comparative religion have made in the attitude of thinking Christians toward the sacred books and teachings of their faith, it is to be feared that the result would only be a greater doctrinal chaos than ever and a greater confusion than exists even now in the aims and methods of missionaries in China. The enormous majority of the class to which I refer know their Bible almost by heart, but they have had no special training as theologians, as critics, as exegetes. Most of them would probably repudiate the idea that any such training is either necessary or desirable. "We have

[1] *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1907, pp. 372–3. See also Kirsopp Lake's *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, pp. 86–8.

come," they might say, "to establish the Cross among the devil-ridden heathen, and to bring them the soul-saving gospel of Jesus, not to advertise the ingenious sophistries of a lot of faithless German professors, swollen with pride of intellect." But the results already attained by the higher criticism cannot be brushed aside in this cavalier manner. If only a fraction of what many learned and conscientious theologians and critics have to say of the Bible and of historical Christianity be accurate, then it is an undeniable fact that many missionaries are to-day teaching the Chinese people things which are not true, or which can be made consistent with truth only by forced interpretations and distortions of language.

It would be interesting to obtain statistical information as to the various circumstances in which young men and women are induced to devote themselves to the missionary life. A large proportion of them would assert that they felt a "call," but it is not so much the call itself that merits attention as the circumstances in which the call is received. Judging from the frequent appeals for missionary recruits that find place in the sermons and addresses of revivalist preachers and missionaries at home on "furlough," it seems not unlikely that in many cases the call comes under the stress of a strong emotional disturbance, the effects of which may or may not be permanent. "Are there not some in this hall to-night," asks a mission-lecturer, "who will give up their political and business prospects, and their other prospects, and go out to serve the Lord in China? It will pay. It will pay ten thousand times over. I have six children. I covet nothing else for them but that they should go as missionaries to China, or some other heathen land."[1]

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 111.

There are thousands of headstrong and unstable young people, who, while under the thrilling influence of a powerful speaker, may feel irresistibly impelled to devote themselves to religious work among the heathen; and when, perhaps, at the close of a specially stirring address, the speaker asks for volunteers for the mission field, these young people spring forward with reckless enthusiasm and declare themselves ready to dedicate their lives to God and the perishing idolaters. In the course of an address given in the Queen's Hall in 1909, under the auspices of the China Inland Mission, the lecturer spoke of the lack of recruits.

'One wonders [he said] why it is that there should be comparatively so few men offering for service in China. Is there any higher work? Is there any higher calling, any nobler life-work? Is there anything grander than to be laying up treasure for all eternity in souls won for Christ in China? We may do soul-saving work at home; but think of China! Think what an opening for a life! What a chance! What would angels not give to stand in the shoes of some young men or women to-day who have life before them, and who, if they choose to do so, may give it to such a cause as this![1]'

Speaking of missionary needs at Changsha in Hunan, a lecturer said: "In the first place, we want men . . . we plead for men. The opportunity is great. Who will go? I trust that here in this audience some one will respond."[2] A great number of those who do respond may be—and are—absolutely unsuited, morally, socially, intellectually, and educationally for the work that lies before them; but if the Mission Board finds them "doctrinally sound," full of religious fervour, and absolutely convinced that God has vouch-

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 101. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

safed a "call," there is small reason to anticipate that it will reject them as unfit. Is it to be marvelled at that mistakes are numerous and serious, and sometimes terribly far-reaching in their effects?

Dr. Rashdall has drawn attention to the strange fact that

> serious enthusiasm for missions tends to be associated with a rather narrow theology. The greatest of the missionary societies of the English Church is largely in the hands of the narrowest section of the narrowest party in that Church. The authorities of the Church Missionary Society have been known to refuse an admirably qualified candidate of otherwise evangelical opinions on account of a measure of sympathy with critical theology which few of our present bishops would disclaim.[1]

The narrow theological views of many missionaries —apart from their too-frequent lack of a liberalising secular education—must tend to make them cold and unsympathetic towards the alien beliefs and practices with which they come into daily contact. I do not wish to assert that they necessarily show aloofness or arrogance in their dealings with non-Christians; their principles, as a rule, save them from that danger. But their lack of sympathetic insight into, and comprehension of, heathen religions and social customs, very frequently leads them to form ludicrously exaggerated estimates of the sins and shortcomings of their heathen neighbours. In a review of a book on China, written by a laywoman, occurs the following observation: "The chapter on missionary work contains a statement which involves the highest compliment which could be paid to missionaries. 'A distinguished feature of (English) missionaries' is that

[1] *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1907, p. 369.

'they always seem to like the Chinese.'"[1] Possibly they do; but it will be admitted by any one who is familiar with the published letters and narratives of missionaries that they often seem to take exceptional pains to conceal their liking. Considering that the missionaries claim to be the bearers of a gospel of good-will and charity, it is an extraordinary thing that the most unflattering and (as I believe) most ungenerous portrayals of the Chinese character have come from the pens of Christian missionaries. If the Chinese people wished to obtain a testimonial of character from their foreign guests, I fancy that the missionary body is the last to which they would apply. This, it will be said, is for the excellent reason that the missionary body knows more than any other section of foreigners about the Chinese sins and vices; but an explanation of this kind is hardly satisfactory, for it does not justify the missionaries in making light of, or explaining away, as they so often do, the good points of the Chinese character. We find in practice that just as it is the missionaries who paint our bad qualities in the most lurid colours, so it is the missionaries (with, of course, a few notable exceptions) who touch most lightly and with the least enthusiasm on such of our qualities as are worthy of praise. Does any one need to be told that the following description of the Chinese character—almost amusing in its wild over-statements—is from the pen of a missionary?

Facts of daily occurrence, brought to the knowledge of the missionaries, and frequently gained through the medium of the missionary hospital, revealed the prevalence of the most fearful immoralities among the people, and furnished a melancholy insight into the desolating horrors of Paganism. Female infanticide, openly confessed, legal-

[1] *The East and the West*, Jan., 1909, p. 114.

ised by custom, and divested of disgrace by its frequency; the scarcity of females, leading as a consequence to a variety of crimes habitually staining the domestic hearth; the dreadful prevalence of all the vices charged by the apostle Paul upon the ancient heathen world; the alarming extent of opium indulgence, destroying the productiveness and natural resources of the people; the universal practice of lying, and suspicion of dishonesty between man and man; the unblushing lewdness of old and young; the full, unchecked torrent of human depravity borne along in its tempestuous channel, and inundating the social system with the overflowing of ungodliness, prove the existence of a kind and degree of moral degradation among a people, of which an excessive statement can scarcely be made, and of which an adequate conception can rarely be formed.[1]

This astonishing paragraph, it is true, was written a good many years ago; but the Chinese character has undergone no transformation in the last forty years, and if we deserved this criticism then we deserve it still. I cannot be far wrong in saying that not a single lay European or American who has lived in China and has formed an adequate conception of the Chinese character will feel inclined to endorse the wholesale condemnations which have been uttered by ministers of the Christian gospel. Certainly they would not be endorsed by one whose opinion is as much entitled to respect as that of any missionary, and who, being himself a sincere Christian and a friend to missions, is hardly likely to write in a spirit of contradiction to missionary opinion.

The cruelties of the Boxers [says Sir Robert Hart] and the worse than callousness of too many of those in

[1] The Rev. George Smith, church missionary for many years in China, quoted in the Rev. Justus Doolittle's *Social Life of the Chinese*, pp. 591–2 (London, 1868).

power cannot be too harshly described or too severely dealt with, and that the people as a nation have the defects of their qualities can as little be gainsaid; on the other hand, it must as freely be allowed that the Chinese *do possess quite as large a share of admirable qualities as others*, and that these are not merely to be found in isolated cases here and there, but are characteristic of the race as a whole and the civilisation it has developed. They are well behaved, law-abiding, intelligent, economical, and industrious; they can learn anything and do anything; they are punctiliously polite, they worship talent, and *they believe in right so firmly that they scorn to think it requires to be supported or enforced by might;* they delight in literature, and everywhere they have their literary clubs and coteries for hearing and discussing each other's essays and verses; *they possess and practise an admirable system of ethics, and they are generous, charitable, and fond of good works;* they never forget a favour, they make rich return for any kindness, and, though they know money will buy service, a man must be more than wealthy to win public esteem and respect; they are practical, teachable, and wonderfully gifted with common-sense; they are excellent artisans, reliable workmen, *and of a good faith that every one acknowledges and admires in their commercial dealings;* in no country that is or was has the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother" been so religiously obeyed or so fully and without exception given effect to, and it is in fact the keynote of their family, social, official, and national life, and because it is so "their days are long in the land" God has given them. Respect, and not contempt; conciliation, and not dictation; appreciation, and not differential treatment; try this prescription and you will have a healthy body politic, and until this is done it will be the reverse.[1]

If these two character-sketches of the Chinese—

[1] *These from the Land of Sinim*, by Sir Robert Hart, Bart., G.C.M.G., pp. 141–3 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901). (Italics not in original.)

the first by the Rev. George Smith, missionary, the second by Sir Robert Hart, Inspector-General of Customs—were put side by side and laid before an impartial visitor from another planet, it would be difficult for him to realise that both writers were referring to the same people. Is it surprising that the Chinese are regarded as a mysterious and incomprehensible race? However, the slanders and vilifications heaped upon us by an inferior though numerous class of Christian missionaries cease to be a source of serious annoyance to us when we make the discovery that abuse of a very similar kind is levelled at the heads of the missionaries' own countrymen. Referring to the conditions of mission work at Changsha (from which town all missionaries were not long ago ejected by riotous mobs, and to which they of course returned as soon as their wrecked mission-buildings had been made habitable again), a writer in *China's Millions* makes these remarks: "The lives of non-Christian foreigners who have flocked in since Changsha was made an open port, and who have come only for financial gain, add greatly to the difficulty of the work."[1] This is a mild criticism. A more outspoken writer laments that "the same steamer that brings to non-Christian nations Western goods brings also Western books and periodicals. The brutal, immoral trader arrives on the same ship with the missionary; Bibles and whiskey speed across the Pacific in the same cargo."[2] It seems almost surprising, after this, that rather than travel in company with brutal, immoral traders, the missionaries do not charter vessels of their own, which they could have thoroughly fumigated and exorcised before each voyage, and manned by a

[1] *China's Millions*, November, 1909, p. 165.
[2] *The Chinese Recorder*, December, 1909, p. 694.

carefully-selected crew sworn to an abstinence from bad words, and wholly immersed not in whiskey but in piety and good works. Has it never occurred to these religious persons that were it not for "the brutal, immoral trader" there would be far less money than is now forthcoming in America and Europe for the support of foreign missions?

Another missionary writer goes farther still in his criticisms of the failings of his countrymen. "The foreign concessions in the treaty ports of the Far East are Sodoms and Gomorrahs—worse, I believe, than Sodom and Gomorrah of old, because more intelligently, more deliberately, wicked. All the vices of our Western civilisation are pouring into the Far East."[1] One may perhaps be permitted to ask whether, after some years spent in proximity to four hundred million vicious Chinese and several thousand vicious Europeans and Americans, the missionaries themselves may not run a serious risk of some slight moral contamination.

In 1908 a deeply-interesting letter from a young Chinese Christian student in the United States was published in an American magazine.[2] The extreme candour with which, though a Christian convert, he criticises the work of Christian missionaries in China and the influence of Christianity itself in America, is partly to be explained by the fact that the letter was not originally intended for publication; but this adds to rather than detracts from its interest. I have no space for the whole letter, but the following extracts will sufficiently indicate its general character:

[1] This is quoted in the *Overland China Mail* (Hongkong) of March 29, 1910. The following is the editorial comment: "Of course we know that we are a pretty bad lot, but surely this reverend gentleman is painting too lurid a picture."

[2] *The American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1908.

So great my admiration and worship of the Western civilisation has been and still is; so deeply have I been intoxicated with Christianity while in Christian schools at home and abroad, and still am; so predominantly I have been influenced and attracted by the good Christians and missionaries, and still am; and their influence upon me is, after all, not bad, but beneficent and ennobling, I think. Yet, miserable me! in spite of all, I cannot help feeling an irresistible reaction in my spirit and soul. I have something against the Christians as such, and their conceptions of Christianity.

At first I thought that the enlightened West knows China with her people and civilisation, and knows us better than the so-called ignorant and uncivilised China knows the great modern and proud world. But really, is there any difference between the Chinese as knowers of others and others as knowers of the Chinese? I can tell you only truly and respectfully that there is too much ignorance even in the circle of university men here. You can tell the rest yourself. . . .

I think the missionaries, in spite of their good-will, noble devotion, and unselfish work, *have done more harm to China than good;* they have done more harm than any other people from the West, politicians and traders, and the greatest of all these harms is that China has been made unknown and, much worse, misunderstood. Consciously and unconsciously, purposefully and indifferently, directly and indirectly (such as through statesmen, travellers, etc.), *missionaries make misrepresentations* and thereby cause the Western people to form misunderstandings. It may be that I can as well say that the missionaries have played upon the people and made fools of them. Am I saying too much? Of course I am addressing now the intelligent people.

The missionaries, generally speaking, are confined within the low parts of China's civilisation. They come into contact with the worst element of China's citizenship and morality. It has been, furthermore, their interest and

habit so see the dark and gloomy side of China. The truth is that the *missionary attitude* in China has been largely *egotistic fault-finding*, almost never wholesome criticism. When they write home, they usually draw pictures of the worst things that they have seen, and often give bad interpretations of good things. When they come home, they tell the people of abnormal and unusual cases that they know of. Of course the purpose of the missionaries is to appeal to the missionary sympathy of their own countrymen. They want to arouse and revive their missionary spirit and work up and stir up missionary enthusiasm. I do henceforth ask for a fair and square answer to my honest and sincere question, "*Who is responsible for the misconception* of things Chinese in this large Western part of the world?"

. . . I should like to add that, as far as personal characters, morality, and relations are concerned, I am sorry to say that in my own experience I have been unable to find much difference between Christians and non-Christians in this country. The fact is that non-Christians treat me as well as the Christians, if not better.

Patriotism is now my decided journey of life. For China, our dear, great, and old country, I am very willing, if it is necessary, even to sacrifice my insignificant self and give it in exchange for the sacred habitation of our dear ancestors and the happy land of our beloved successors. For the salvation of China I am even willing to damn my soul, if necessary. . . .

In short, my position, forcibly expressed, amounts to this: *Rather China without Christianity than Christianity without China.*

Remember the fact that from the Chinese standpoint the students here have many things to tell their fellow-countrymen when they return home, and, if they will, to the great discredit and shame of Christian America.

Should you missionaries and Americanised Christians, fortunately few, *be more cautious, considerate, and sympathetic*, we would rejoice and bless you greatly. Then

most Chinese will help you too. Or I seem to see as if they were clouds, darkness, and dangers coming to cover and overwhelm them. Certainly one-sided and bigoted Christianity is doomed. Modern China will not tolerate it.

I can assure my Western readers that the opinions of this young Chinese student, though his remarks are based only on his own experience, are not the opinions of himself alone. He has given them vigorous expression, but not more vigorous, in my opinion at least, than the occasion demands. More than one Chinese, on reading this letter, rejoiced to know that in the not distant future this young student might be able, from the vantage ground of high office in his own country, to help in the great work that lies before every educated and capable man and boy in this empire —the work of completely recovering the sovereign rights of China throughout the limits of her own territory, and of making her fully worthy of the splendid future which lies before her and of the great position that she is destined to occupy among the nations of the world.

I did not quote from this letter for its own sake only, remarkable as it is; I wished to refer to it rather on account of the ignorant criticism and simulated scorn with which it has been greeted in missionary circles. One missionary asserts that "there are few, if any, healthy-minded young Chinese to-day holding any such ideas." Whether this is true or not perhaps depends on the exact signification of "healthy-minded." The missionary would doubtless hold that to criticise adversely any aspect of Christianity, or of missionary enterprise, *ipso facto* denotes a mind diseased. He goes on to characterise the opinions expressed in the letter as "absurd," and concludes that "if claiming to be

representative of the views of young Chinese, or even the few who have studied abroad, they are ridiculous."[1] It is hardly necessary to point out that the writer of the letter made no "claim" of any kind. He did not presume to be giving the opinions of "young Chinese" in general, but the opinions which he himself had formed as a result of his personal experiences in a Christian country. But there is no doubt whatever that a very large number of his fellow-students would endorse the views which he has so clearly and forcibly expressed.

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, April, 1909, p. 223.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN CHINA

THE Chinese are not and never were intolerant of Christianity regarded strictly as a religion; though it is quite true that a large and ever-increasing section of the student-class regards many Christian beliefs—and many traditional native beliefs—as puerile superstitions. Few but missionaries are ever heard to deny the existence of religious tolerance among the people of China, or ever attempt to minimise its significance. Laymen whose knowledge of China is quite as good as that of most missionaries and who approach all Chinese problems in a far more charitable and open-minded spirit, admit that in this matter the Chinese people have nothing to learn from Europe or America, and indeed might more appropriately play the part of teachers. Prof. E. H. Parker, for instance, remarks that "it is surely very much to China's credit that at no period of her history have the ruling powers 'in being' ever for one instant refused hospitality and consideration to any religion recommended to them as such. If there has been hostility, it has always sprung up from political and economical causes." A few pages farther on he points out

that the Chinese Government has always been one of the broadest-minded and the most liberally-inclined towards pure religion; that it has never persecuted to the

merciless and cruel extent once so common all over Europe; and that when it has seemed to persecute at all, it has really only defended what it honestly believed to be its own political rights; it has never encouraged religious spite, mental tyranny, or the stifling of any free opinion that keeps clear of State policy, scandal, or libel. European Christianity obtained three centuries ago a reception as generous as the earlier foreign religions had met with; there was no trace of sanctioned persecution until personal interests, official appointments, and political questions came to the fore. . . . And as regards the Protestants of our day, if they can only go about their charitable business without sneering at the Catholics; refrain from harshly criticising subjects dear to Chinese prejudice; and not allow themselves to be made tools of by mercenary natives, there is no apparent reason why they should not for ever enjoy the toleration which the Chinese have always been disposed to extend to religion *qua* religion. The same remarks of course apply to the Roman Catholics of the nineteenth century up to the present time, and to their behaviour towards Protestants.[1]

Almost fanatically intolerant themselves, the missionaries of the last century, and many of those of our own time, were and are not chivalrous enough to give credit to the Chinese for the tolerant spirit which they have always shown towards alien religions as such.[2] Our foreign guests either deny altogether that such tolerance exists, or if compelled to admit the fact they try to explain it away: anything rather than grant that the Chinese possess a virtue unknown to Christen-

[1] *China and Religion*, pp. 2, 6–7 (John Murray, 1905).

[2] "So far as religion pure and simple is concerned, the Chinese bear the palm, among all the nations of the earth, for toleration; and the presumption is therefore irresistibly strong that it is never the religious but some other element in the missionary compost that rouses the passions of the Chinese."—Alexander Michie, *Missionaries in China*, p. 8 (Tientsin, 1893).

dom.[1] The pages of writers like Dr. Edkins, who died not long ago, abound in indications of a similar ungenerous attitude. Referring to a conversation which he had with a native scholar, Dr. Edkins writes thus:

> He said to me on one occasion: "All countries have their sages. We have Confucius. Buddha was the sage of India. The Mongols have the Dalai Lama, and the Mohammedans Mahomet. You in the West have Jesus. It is necessarily so in the arrangements of Heaven." . . . This show of liberality is very common with the Chinese when conversing with foreigners upon Christianity. It springs partly from politeness, which induces them to admit, for the time, the equality of the religion of their foreign interlocutor with their own. It comes in part, also, from the circumstance that they do not claim a divine character for Confucius. They regard him as nothing more than the wisest of men. They never speak of him as God, nor do they claim inspiration for his words. They can afford, then, to admit that other religions are as suitable for other nations as theirs is for them, if they enjoin a good morality.[2]

That Dr. Edkins should have failed to give the Chinese full and generous credit for the virtue—if it may be so called—of religious tolerance, is all the more remarkable when we find that he himself had abundant proof given him of the prevalence of that virtue. So strong, however, was his bias against "heathendom" that he failed to see how poorly his own attitude compared with that of the mere heathen, even when his own version of his experiences was the

[1] One of the early Protestant missionaries—the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff—while admitting that in China "there exists the most perfect toleration," explains this by alleging the complete indifference of the Chinese to matters affecting religion, and points out that "nobody will quarrel for anything he views with contempt." (*China Opened*, vol. ii., p. 184.) The Chinese have no contempt for religion.

[2] *Religion in China*, pp. 74–5.

only one available for a comparison. For example, he thus describes a visit to a famous Buddhist monastery near Hangchow:

The priests of this old monastery still entertain visitors hospitably. The abbot was very friendly in his manner when my companion and I were there, so much so that he recommended an adjoining piece of ground for building a Christian temple. He thought that the Buddhist and Christian religions might be maintained very harmoniously in this close proximity to each other. He added some remarks on the hostility shown by Christian missionaries to idolatry, and recommended that they should exhibit what he chose to represent as a more liberal spirit, and cease from their attacks upon the customs of other religions.[1]

I make no comment on this most significant passage, but confidently leave it to the impartial consideration of those to whom this book is addressed.

That this was not an isolated case of Buddhist tolerance there is abundant evidence to prove. The books and articles written by European missionaries themselves are amply sufficient to provide illustrations of the startling contrast between the tolerant attitude of the Chinese Buddhists and the barbarous intolerance (for so we Chinese regard it) of the Christians.

This is how the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff describes his visit to a great monastic establishment on the coast of China:

Though we were in a dark hall, standing before the largest image of Buddha, there was nothing impressive; even our English sailors were disgusted with the scene; several times I raised my voice to invite all to adore God in spirit and in truth, but the minds of the priests seemed

[1] *Religion in China*, p. 69.

callous, and a mere assent is all that this exhortation produced.[1]

The Chinese monks may have been callous but they at least appear to have behaved like gentlemen, which is more than can be said of their European visitors. The reference to the opinions of the English sailors—who doubtless followed the lead of their reverend cicerone in expressing their disgust—seems scarcely necessary; the average English bluejacket is not usually appealed to on points of ecclesiastical architecture or Buddhistic art. As for the several abortive attempts to engage the whole company in a Christian prayer, one speculates in vain as to what more could reasonably have been expected from the attendant Buddhists than a somewhat frigid "assent." Perhaps not even that meagre courtesy would be forthcoming from the clergy of an English parish church if a party of Chinese visitors were to invite them to join in a hymn of praise to Confucius or to Buddha. It might even happen that the Chinese visitors would be bundled unceremoniously out of the building.

The Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff failed to observe anything good in the priests of Buddha. "Scarcely had we landed[2] when a party of priests, in common garbs and very filthy, hastened down to us chanting hymns." He admits—in spite of his uncharitable, exaggerated, and inaccurate remarks about the priests—that the Buddhists had selected a most attractive spot in which

[1] Quoted in Doolittle's *Social Life of the Chinese*, p. 190 (London, 1868).

[2] These passages are taken from Gutzlaff's *Journal of a Voyage along the Coast of China, 1832–3*, quoted in Sir John Davis's *The Chinese* (1851 ed.), vol. ii., pp. 186–9; and from Gutzlaff's *China Opened*, vol. i., p. 116. Gutzlaff is describing his arrival at the beautiful Buddhist island of Pootoo (P'u-t'o), off the coast of Chehkiang.

to celebrate what he calls "the orgies of idolatry." It is "like a fairyland," he says, "so romantic is everything that meets the eye"; but he also takes care to describe the place as "the infamous seat of abomination." This is because its heathen ceremonies filled his austerely Protestant soul with shocked surprise. "The same words," he says, "were a hundred times repeated. None of the officiating persons showed any interest in the ceremony, for some were looking around, laughing and joking, while others muttered their prayers. The few people who were present, not to attend the worship but to gaze at us, did not seem in the least degree to feel the solemnity of the service."

The Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff said that Pootoo was like a fairyland, and he was right; but he would have done well to omit his description of the "orgies," for he merely reveals the fact that he was totally incapable of appreciating the Oriental attitude towards the celebration of religious rites. His description of the "laughing and joking" is an exaggeration; but it is quite true that in China, as in other Oriental countries, it is not considered necessary to cultivate a special solemnity of demeanour for ordinary non-official religious ceremonials. The religious attitude which conveniently, if inaccurately, may be described as Puritanism is, or would be, abhorrent to the average Eastern mind. This need hardly be wondered at when we remember that even in Protestant Europe and America a relish for Sabbatarian gloom is an acquired taste. When I was a student in England I knew a family of children who were always getting into trouble for "irreverence" in church, and for restlessness during litany and sermon. When their parents proposed to take them to a theatre or other

place of amusement they used to plot and intrigue with a view to so arranging matters that the evening selected should be a Saturday. Their reason for this—they were careful to keep it a dark secret from their parents—was based on the useful domestic fiction that if children sat up late at night they must necessarily be in a state of physical prostration the next day; hence if the next day were a Sunday they experienced the enormous satisfaction of being "let off church." Now Oriental children do not have to plot and intrigue and deceive their parents, in the hope of escaping from attendance at a religious ceremony. If they do not wish to attend, no one would dream of compelling them to do so, though probably nothing but illness would induce them to stay away; and if during the "service" they fidget a little or even go so far as audibly to express their dissatisfaction with the proceedings it would never occur to any one to cuff them or whisper dark threats of impending punishment. Perhaps the fact that in the East religious reverence is not necessarily associated with a long face and prim manners, explains how it is that European missionaries, like Mr. Gutzlaff, refer so constantly to what they suppose to be the lack of reverence shown by Orientals at their temple services; and it may also help to explain why the detestable vice of religious hypocrisy is so seldom found among the adherents of Oriental faiths.

This, however, is by the way. Let us pass, in imagination, over the eighty years that have elapsed since Gutzlaff paid his pioneer visit to Pootoo. The "orgies of idolatry," we find, are still performed there daily in the splendid temples that are man's contribution to the beauty of that most charming of Chinese islands. So far from there being any alteration in the tolerant

attitude of the Buddhist monks towards the teachers of a rival faith, it seems that lapse of time has only served to emphasise that attitude. The following significant paragraph, entitled "A Christian Conference in a Monastery," is taken from a missionary journal published as recently as August, 1909:

The sacred island of Pootoo is well known as one of the chief pilgrim resorts for Buddhist devotees in Eastern China. The monasteries of this island have recently been the scene of a well-attended conference organised by the Chinese Y.M.C.A. It is remarkable that no difficulty was experienced in arranging for the accommodation in the largest monasteries of these Christian workers, who held their meetings, sang their hymns of praise, and joined in daily prayer to the true God in the name of Jesus Christ in precincts devoted for ages to the Buddhist form of religion. In order to comply as far as possible with the requirements of the island the members of the conference became vegetarians during the twelve days of their stay.

We may be pardoned for looking upon this as a happy augury of the coming conquest of Buddhism by Christianity in China. Buddhism in the true spirit of the devotional life has already marked for contemplation some of the loveliest places to be found in China. No Christian will desire to overthrow these sites, which stand as a perpetual witness to the religious need and aspiration of man, but will surely work to accomplish the time when, in all such places, superstition and the worship of idols shall give place to the praise of Almighty God, and when the erstwhile Buddhist temple shall testify to the glory of His holy name. No cost in sacrifice, consistent with devotion to the truth of God in Jesus Christ, would be counted too great, which secured such a result.[1]

The members of the Conference were evidently more

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Aug., 1909, p. 422.

broad-minded than the Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff, who would doubtless have shuddered at the idea of accepting the hospitality of this "infamous seat of abomination"; and the fact that they condescend to submit to the rules of Buddhist vegetarianism during their stay on the island is a most welcome indication that they were anxious to abstain from riding rough-shod—as many of their predecessors were wont to do—over the religious prejudices of their rivals. But what are we to say about the rest of this paragraph? *We may be be pardoned*, says the Christian missionary *for looking upon this as a happy augury of the coming conquest of Buddhism by Christianity in China.* Perhaps so. The Christians were enjoying the hospitality of the Buddhists; for twelve consecutive days they were shown an example of courtesy and tolerance the like of which would be shown to Buddhists in no country in the Western hemisphere. In their account of their visit to the island they admit that "it is remarkable that no difficulty was experienced in arranging for the accommodation of the Christian workers," yet they utter no word of gratitude or of friendly appreciation. It is merely "remarkable." The paragraph closes with an expression of hope that these temples, in which Christians were the guests of Buddhists, will some day become centres of Christian worship. Would it not have been courteous, in the circumstances, to have abstained from the public expression of this pious hope? I, too, have visited the fairyland of Pootoo and have been for many days the guest of the Buddhist monks. I know the place well, and love it. It is neither as a Buddhist nor as a Christian that I venture to utter this prophecy, that if Pootoo ever passes under the control of Christian missionaries, that little fairyland—that "precious stone set in the silver

sea"—will become a sadder, a gloomier, a less beautiful place than it is to-day, when its gleaming temples still reflect, however faintly, something of the glory of the Light of Asia.

CHAPTER VI

MONASTICISM IN CHINA, CHRISTIAN INTOLERANCE, AND THE CONVERSION OF ABORIGINES

WE have seen that the doctrines of love and goodwill inculcated by the founder of their religion do not prevent Christian missionaries from speaking harshly and discourteously of the priests of an alien creed. The fact that a missionary party was willing to dwell for twelve days side by side with Buddhist monks in an "infamous seat of abomination" such as Pootoo might be an indication that the old intolerance was a thing of the past. But it would be premature to hope that such is the case. There lies open before me a missionary publication[1] in which the question of the evangelisation of the heathen is dealt with in much the same way as it was dealt with sixty years ago. The frontispiece consists of the portrait of a Buddhist monk, and on the opposite page, printed in scarlet type, occur these explanatory words: "These Buddhist priests are mostly illiterate men. Some are even criminals; others have been dedicated to the temples from childhood. Only a very few have any intelligent ideas of the Buddhist religion." The portrait of the monk is evidently a photograph. It is true that the crimson words do not assert of this particular monk that he was a scoundrel, but he is made to serve as the representative of a class of whom the majority are

[1] *Heathenism under the Searchlight*, by William Remfry Hunt (London: Morgan & Scott, 1908).

illiterate, and some are criminals. Was it a Christian act, or, if not unchristian, was it chivalrous, to ask a Buddhist monk to sit for his photograph, and then to use the photograph for the purpose of illustrating the crimson inscription? As to the morals of Buddhist monks in general, I have no wish to enter into the wearisome discussion of a question that Christian missionaries have long ago settled to their own satisfaction, but perhaps I may be privileged to make a few remarks on a topic which to myself is one of considerable personal interest.

Monasticism, in both Europe and Asia, for ages past has been found congenial to the natures of a certain exceptional type of men, often highly gifted and spiritually minded, to whom ordinary mundane excitements give little or no pleasure, and to whom solitude and peace, combined with ample opportunities for a quiet student's life amid attractive surroundings, constitute the greatest earthly happiness. For the sake of these men it is possible that the monastic institution, in some shape or other, will always continue to exist, though not necessarily in connection with any form of ecclesiasticism. But this mode of life is peculiarly liable—no matter what the religion may be with which it is associated—to be corrupted and degraded by the evil influence and example of men who, while still keenly alive to all the seductive pleasures of the world, have for selfish and unworthy reasons adopted the outward forms of the monastic life. "The most saintly professions," as Froude says, "are not safe from the grossest corruption, and the more ambitious the pretensions to piety, the more austere is the vengeance on the neglect of it."[1] Every one has

[1] *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, vol. iii., p. 129 (Longmans, Green, & Co., 1891).

heard of the state of moral squalor into which many of the Christian monasteries had fallen at the time of the Reformation. Even the conventual life of Spain and Italy of the present age "is regarded," says Froude, "with the same hatred with which it was abhorred by our fathers; it denotes nothing but sensuality, ignorance, and sin."[1] Whether the Buddhist monasteries in China have ever sunk to the level of some of the monkish institutions of Europe a few centuries ago, or of Spain and Italy a generation ago, is a doubtful question which I should be inclined to answer in the negative.[2] I have seen the insides of many of the best-known monastic institutions in China, and the conclusion I have come to is that in the great fraternities to be found in large cities there is a strong tendency to corruption, idleness, and vice, but that in most of the lonely hill and island monasteries, the sites of which were chosen ages ago on account of their romantic scenery and their suitability for the contemplative life, the conduct of the great majority of the inmates is not open to much serious moral criticism, while that of a select few would compare not unfavourably with that of any body of celibates in the world. It should be remembered that the monks with whom European visitors come in contact are, almost invariably, the most secular-minded of all the members of the brotherhood to which they belong. There are but few Western travellers who have had any opportunity of judging of Chinese mon-

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 7.

[2] I am referring to what may be described as Chinese Buddhism proper, not to the hideous travesty of Buddhism known as Lamaism. The great monasteries of Central and Southern China have no connection whatever with the lamaseries of Tibet, Mongolia, and a small portion of Northern China, and they owe no spiritual or other allegiance to the Grand Lama. Of Lamaism I do not profess to have a good word to say, and the sooner it becomes extinct the better for all concerned.

asticism from the conduct and character of its brightest ornaments. With regard to the charge brought against ordinary Chinese Buddhist monks—even those of the great monasteries of Chehkiang and the neighbouring provinces—that they often show a contemptible ignorance of the Buddhist religion, its history and scriptures, it should be remembered that very many of the best and most intelligent of the Buddhist monks in China have been attracted to the monasteries not through any special devotion to the Buddhist faith as such, but through a hankering after the contemplative life or the fascination of the monastic ideal. It is beyond question that a similar observation might be made of many of the ablest and most celebrated of Christian monks, especially in the days when a gentleman was almost compelled to choose whether he would be a destroyer of men's bodies or a saviour of men's souls—whether, in other words, he would set before himself the ideal of a swashbuckler or that of a saint. (I do not mean to deny, of course, that the ideal of a Galahad may have been higher than both; it was certainly less capable of realisation.) The average man of the world—Asiatic or European—fails to see anything alluring in the *vita religiosa* and does not understand how any sane person can be sincerely devoted to such an ideal. But there is always, in all ages and in all countries, a small minority of men who are equally unable to understand how men can consecrate their intellects and moral energies to the sordid scramble for wealth and position, and sacrifice whatever noble ideals they may once have possessed on the altars of social or political ambition. Yet who, after all, is to take it upon himself to decide whether the cloistered monk or the worldly gold-winner is treading the more excellent way, or to constitute himself arbitrator between the combatants in that

never-ending "world war of dying flesh against the life"? Must not each man, as the Buddha said, be a lamp unto himself?

We have seen that one of the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff's methods of propagating his religious convictions among the heathen was to offer up Christian prayers in a Buddhist temple, regardless of any silent objections that his courteous Buddhist hosts might have to this proceeding. Mr. Gutzlaff's conduct was all the more surprising in one who laid down the rule that in the propagation of Christianity "nothing *in the spirit of love and meekness* must be left untried to bring these myriads to the fold of God."[1] Had all missionaries in China made up their minds, at the very beginning, absolutely to relinquish the support of the secular arm in their struggle against heathendom, and to use only the weapons of *love and meekness*, Christianity might possibly have been a prominent religion in China at this late day. There is reason to fear that it is now too late. The gunboat policy—the policy that holds a pistol to China's head and says, "Admit Christianity freely into your Empire or we fire!"—can never be forgotten by the Chinese, and it can never be explained away. Christianity is now, and perhaps always will be, associated in the Chinese mind with the political humiliation of their country.

I lately ventured to draw the attention of a European Christian to Mr. Gutzlaff's methods, and was assured by him that missionaries no longer resort to such crude means of evangelisation as that referred to, and that the Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff was merely guilty of one of the unavoidable errors that are necessarily committed from time to time by all pioneers. "All missionaries now understand," said my informant, "that they must

[1] *China Opened*, vol. ii., p. 185.

be scrupulously careful to avoid running the faintest risk of hurting either the religious or the social prejudices of the Chinese people, and they never do so except by some unavoidable accident." Would that this were true! The day after this conversation took place I read the following passage in a missionary journal. It relates the proceedings of a missionary at Pingyaohsien:

A short time since we paid a visit to a famous temple in the hills, some fifty *li* from here. In the temple there is a famous idol which is credited with all kinds of wonder-working powers, and which is supposed to look after the temporal and spiritual interests of the people living in the surrounding neighbourhood. The occasion of our visit was the yearly *hwei* (fair). Once a year thousands of people from the villages far and near pay a visit to this shrine, and, in consideration of performing certain acts of worship and parting with a few cash, expect to have their interests conserved for twelve months, until the next annual pilgrimage, when the god is further propitiated. We arrived at this place armed with a good supply of books and tracts. What a sight! The temple, the hill on which it stood, and the valley below, literally swarmed with gaily-dressed men and women, the women, strange to say, being specially in evidence. Buying, selling, feasting, and playing were the order of the day. Entering the temple, the usual sad sight met our gaze, men and women prostrating themselves before the idol and parting with their hard-earned cash, which lay in heaps before the shrine, in order, as they supposed, to purchase immunity from trouble during the ensuing year. *We commenced preaching and selling books in the temple courtyard, much to the people's disgust, who requested us to leave. This we did not, however, before we had sold several books and had an opportunity of directing their attention to the One True God.* Among the thousands attending the fair we sold a few books and scat-

tered hundreds of tracts, but the people seemed particularly hard and unresponsive, many turning away with scorn from the tracts which were offered them freely. Truly, "They know not, neither do they understand; they walk to and fro in darkness."[1]

Probably a narrative of this kind conveys entirely different impressions to different classes of readers. The missionary and his sympathisers will be pained, doubtless, by the dismal news of the hardness of the people's hearts. The gospel is offered to them freely, yet they reject it with scorn. Truly these lost ones walk to and fro in darkness! Less prejudiced readers, it may be, will marvel chiefly at the extraordinary self-restraint shown by a mob of poor Chinese rustics, undisciplined and unpoliced, who, though they were admittedly disgusted with the importunity of the missionaries in pushing their way into a temple during a festival season, nevertheless abstained from the use of force even when the persistent foreigners refused to obey the very reasonable request that they should go away. Of this remarkable yet typical instance of Chinese self-control not a word of appreciation appears in the narrative. What would a British crowd of 'Arries and 'Arriets have done with a party of aggressive Jews or Mohammedans or Buddhists in similar circumstances? How would an American crowd have treated a band of negroes or Mormons or old-time Quakers who refused to leave a church or a meeting-house after they had been told that their presence was unwelcome? If the disgust of the Chinese had on this occasion expressed itself in the form of hard blows (as it very well might) and in the shedding of Christian blood, there would have been a repetition, no doubt, of

[1] *China's Millions*, August, 1909, p. 121. (Italics not in original.)

the oft-told tale. China would have added a few more thousands to her National Debt, a few more Chinese heads would have rolled in the dust, another official or two would have been cashiered, and perhaps a site would have been granted for the erection of a nice new Christian chapel, in which, in due course, hymns of praise would be chanted in honour of the Christ who taught the gospel of Love, Meekness, Good-will, and Charity. Western ears are startled and horrified by the news of "A missionary murdered," "Another barbarous outrage in China"; but do the people of the West always make full allowance for the numberless occasions on which, in spite of tremendous provocation, a Chinese crowd has stifled its fury and stayed its hand while in the act to strike?

Missionaries are always faced by a very strong temptation to deny the existence of religious toleration in China, for unless it can be established that Christians are persecuted for the sake of their religious beliefs as such, it is not easy to claim the glory of martyrdom for those who have been killed by a heathen mob. Hence, we still hear from missionaries, now and again, of alleged cases of religious persecution. Several narratives have recently appeared in missionary journals with reference to the sufferings of certain evangelised hill-tribesmen called Miao. These mountain dwellers of South-western China are the remnants of a once powerful race that has gradually fallen back before the advancing Chinese in much the same way that the Celts in Britain were driven to the northern and western mountains by the invading Saxons. Like the Karenni in Burma and numerous low-caste tribes in India, these people show a considerable readiness to embrace Christianity. As to the reasons for this fact, it may be remarked that a religion which teaches the equality

of all men in the sight of God naturally tends to increase the self-respect of a race that is treated with contempt by the rest of mankind; the people of such a race, moreover, are in many respects like trustful children, and therefore believe all that the missionaries tell them about the great happiness and unimaginable rewards that Christianity will give them, both in this world and in the next; finally, such people are apt to feel genuine gratitude for the kindness and sympathy which, contrary to all their previous experience of strangers, they have received from the emissaries of an alien race. Such considerations as these are quite sufficient to explain how it is that among people like the Miao a whole village will be converted to Christianity in very much less time than it takes to convert a single family of ordinary Chinese; though the missionary, ignoring such practical explanations as these, is not afraid to assert that the conversions are directly due to the miraculous intervention of the Deity.[1] I have no wish, and certainly I have no power, to disabuse his mind of this pious theory, but I desire to draw attention to the alleged cases of persecution of the Christian Miao by their heathen neighbours and chieftains, and to consider whether reasons cannot be found—even if

[1] "The Holy Spirit Himself is working amongst these tribesmen, else how could we account for this thirst for Him?" So says a writer in *China's Millions* (April, 1909, p. 61). Perhaps other explanations of the "thirst" might be found without going outside the writings of Christians of unexceptionable orthodoxy. "The upper castes and the educated classes of Hindu society in towns and cities," says the Bishop of Madras, "have made little or no response to the preaching of the gospel. That is true. But at the other end of the social scale, the lower castes, the out-castes and the aboriginal tribes are being gathered into the Church in large masses." But the Bishop is careful to explain that "the movement towards Christianity among these classes is not wholly or even mainly a spiritual one. To a very large extent it is social."—*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1907, p. 888.

we rely for evidence solely on the missionary's own account of the matter—for doubting whether the persecutions in question were due, as he believed, to purely religious causes.

"The devil is at his old work, and God's dear children are undergoing tribulation *simply because they are Christians.*"[1] This is the explicit statement of a missionary who personally went, with his helpers, to inquire into the alleged cases of persecution and bring aid to the sufferers. We are told that "by prayer and hymn-singing and speaking words of comfort" the missionary party "sought to sustain the faith and courage of these dear, tried children of God." The sufferings, it appears, were mostly the result of much the same old-fashioned forms of torture as were once employed in Europe by God-fearing men for the purpose of convincing heretics that their theological views were erroneous. One of the Miao "described how his body was first twisted into an unnatural position, then bound to a torturing frame"; another had to wear a chain weighing half-a-hundredweight; others were flogged. Of a place called Hehluh we are told that "this village is divided between God and the devil, and part of the persecution comes from the heathen Miao falsely accusing the Christians."[2] As usual in missionary chronicles, the false accusers are necessarily the heathen, the sufferers necessarily the Christians. But, unfortunately for the Christian case in this particular instance, the chronicler immediately proceeds to give an example of the kind of accusation that leads to the persecution of the Christians.

For instance [he says], a father and son were beaten

[1] *China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 27. (Italics not in original.)
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

and tied up and had two or three goats taken from them *for cutting down trees they used to worship in their heathen days.* These trees are now beautiful stout pillars in the little chapel on the hillside overlooking the village. The chapel is still unfinished. At night we held a splendid meeting under a big walnut-tree.

The concluding part of this paragraph suggests ominous reflections as to the eventual fate of the big walnut-tree. The chapel, be it observed, is still unfinished, and the other trees have been made into beautiful stout pillars; surely it would be a thousand pities if the chapel had to remain unfinished for the want of another fine pillar or two! But the point to be chiefly noticed is that the trees which the zealous Christians had cut down were evidently held in special reverence by the people of the neighbourhood. In all probability they were owned by the whole village in common; for sacred trees are seldom or never the absolute property of a single family. Tree-worship, which, like river- and mountain-worship, once flourished in nearly every part of the world, including Europe, still survives in various sequestered corners of China.[1] The religious rites connected with trees are just as simple and harmless as the old Maypole ceremonies in England (indeed, much simpler and plainer), though from the point of view of the Christian missionary they doubtless involve a breach of the second Commandment.[2] Now

[1] It was Christian missionaries who destroyed tree-worship in Europe. "With Christianity," says Dr. Tylor, "comes a crusade against the holy trees and groves. Boniface hews down in the presence of the priest the huge oak of the Hessian heaven-god, and builds of the timber a chapel to St. Peter." (*Primitive Culture*, 4th ed., vol. ii., p. 228. The place where the event described by Dr. Tylor is supposed to have happened is Fritzlar, not very far from Cassel.) The spirit of Boniface, as we see, is still active among the Christian missionaries of to-day.

[2] In describing alien forms of religious belief there is always a diffi-

the particular trees referred to in the passage we are discussing were no doubt cut down by the two Christians from most high-minded motives, though with an excess of pious zeal. In their anxiety to convert to Christian uses objects which had hitherto been associated with the orgies of heathenism they unfortunately omitted to ascertain what their unregenerate neighbours had to say in the matter. The outraged neighbours therefore proceeded to deal with their refractory clansmen in the method that has been sanctified by immemorial custom in every Far Eastern land. They held a kind of informal inquiry into the conduct of the delinquents, convicted them of interfering with the customary rights of the villagers, and sentenced them to punishment. The timber could not be restored; it had been made into pillars for the chapel, and the villagers stood in so much dread of the privileged foreigners that the idea of removing them by force was probably rejected at once, if it ever entered their heads. They therefore contented themselves with giving the culprits a beating and imposing, as we have seen, a fine of "two or three goats." Punishments of this kind are inflicted by the authority of village headmen in thousands of cases yearly in every part of the Chinese Empire, and, though punishments may be excessive in some cases and unjust in others (for village tribunals are not infallible), there is no reason to suppose that this democratic system of rough-and-ready justice has not on the whole worked smoothly and well; indeed, the solidarity and permanence of the village organi-

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culty about nomenclature. The connotation of the English word *worship* is such that the expression "tree-worship" is almost certain to give a false impression to those who have not personally studied and come in contact with any of the animistic forms of belief of which this is an example.

sations in China and her subject territories afford the best proof of the system's success. One of the gravest difficulties attendant on the introduction of Christianity into China has been and still is that Christian converts have been allowed to regard themselves as standing to some extent outside the ordinary social life of their clan or village, as independent of the authority of elders, as not amenable to the judgments of the clan-tribunals, and as free from all liability to take part in ceremonies or ancestral usages that may by any ingenuity be described as "heathen." When a Christian is sentenced, as his non-Christian neighbours frequently are, to a fine or punishment for some breach of clan-custom, he is sure to make complaints to his missionary, who is more than likely to jump forthwith to the conclusion that "this dear, tried child of God" is being persecuted on account of his devotion to Christ.

But to continue the tale of persecution among the Miao:

> Two of Mr. Pollard's [native] preachers happened to pass the place where a chieftain . . . and his crowd of heathen were sacrificing to the devil and drinking blood-water. These two men were laid hold of and compelled to join in the heathen worship. For resisting, they were most cruelly beaten and bound and carried in front of the idol.

The devil-worshipping ceremony—here all too briefly referred to—sounds thrilling, and I have no doubt that there are several European anthropologists who would give a good deal for the chance of personally witnessing a ceremony of this kind. The "idol" before which the unlucky preachers were carried was apparently an image of "the devil." Scientific inquirers would doubtless have a good many questions to ask as to this

devil's identity, but in the absence of any information curiosity must remain unsatisfied.[1] As to the cruel treatment of the Christian preachers, I searched the missionary's narrative vainly at first for any indication of the real motive of these devil-worshipping and blood-drinking chieftains in ordering them to be beaten, though I felt confident that no tribal or clan chief or "laird" in the empire takes the smallest interest in his people's theological opinions so long as they faithfully perform the social and other duties which by ancestral and tribal custom are binding upon all members of the clan. In a more recent account of the Miao Christians, however, a clue to the real state of matters is unwittingly provided by a fellow-missionary and companion of the first writer.

These lairds [he says—referring to the customs of the No-su and Miao and their tribal arrangements] are always quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and the tenants must go with their landlords to fight. In these fights men are often killed and wounded. . . . Mr. Adam tells *the converts they must not on any account take part in these fights, and this, among other things, antagonises the lairds.*[2]

What other result could conceivably have been

[1] The following apposite passage is quoted from the great theologian, Dr. Adolf Harnack. Writing of the "vile aspersions cast upon all Christians" in the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, he remarks that they arose chiefly "from the evil tendency, prevalent in all ages, to regard adherents of an alien faith as persons of evil life and to say the worst that can be said concerning both them and their assemblies. The populace *takes every religion which differs from its own, and which it does not understand, for devil worship.*" Thus we need not be surprised to find Christian missionaries of our own day casting the same aspersions on the religious rites of other races that eighteen centuries ago were cast upon Christianity itself.

[2] *China's Millions*, Sept., 1909, p. 141. (Italics not in original.)

anticipated? The reader must understand that these tribes are in a stage of development that is very similar to that of the Scottish Highlanders up to the days of James V. or even—to some extent—up to the abolition of the heritable jurisdiction of the Highland chiefs in 1747. "The Chinese authorities," as we are told by our missionary chronicler, "are nominally supreme, but for the most part they allow these lairds to do as they like in their own districts." Now large numbers of the tribesmen, as we have seen, are adopting Christianity. Probably the freedom from military service, which their foreign teachers encourage and even instruct them to claim, is regarded as one of the most valuable privileges that baptism confers. But what becomes of the unhappy laird who with three-quarters of a clan of non-fighting Christians finds himself involved in warfare with a neighbouring laird whose clansmen are still fighting heathen? We are told of the early Christians in Europe that while refusing to fight their country's battles with secular weapons they gladly offered to do so with spiritual ones and assured the Roman Emperor that they could make themselves much more useful by praying for him than by fighting for him. Perhaps a similar plea may be advanced by the war-weary Miao, but their perplexed chieftains may surely be excused if they show unwillingness to accept the converts' view of the situation. One shudders to contemplate what a chieftain of the Macgregor or the Mackintosh clan would have done with a refractory clansman who refused to follow him to battle on the ground that he had joined a foreign religious society that forbade warfare. Besides, is it not rather ungrateful and unreasonable of the foreign missionaries to emphasise the blessings of peace and the wickedness of war, seeing

that it is only as a result of successful warfare that they themselves have been able to establish a religious citadel within the boundaries of the Chinese Empire, and to preach the gospel of the Prince of Peace in the land of the Miao?[1]

A Miao laird, if left to himself, might doubtless check any tendency to insubordination among his vassals just as effectively as a Highland chief of the fifteenth century, but though his knowledge of politics may be slight, he is necessarily aware that in defying a foreign missionary he runs the risk of involving himself and his clan in irretrievable ruin. His position, therefore, is an extremely delicate one. Is it to be wondered at that he rues the day when Christianity first made its appearance within his territorial limits and began to sap the allegiance of his once obedient clansmen?[2] Is it surprising that he regards the foreign missionary as a formidable ogre with whom it were well to avoid coming to close quarters? In one of the missionary narratives already quoted we read as follows:

Mr. Adam wished to call on a *tumu* (laird) who was oppressing some Christians. . . . The day following we

[1] In *China's Millions* (Oct., 1909, p. 127) we are told of some Chinese converts ("true genuine cases") who "need our prayers and sympathy as, *knowing Jesus' disciples cannot retaliate*, some of their neighbours are subjecting them to petty persecutions." The words that I have italicised are of great significance. The Chinese Government would open its eyes wide with astonishment if it were told that Christians never "hit back." China would be richer than she is now by many millions sterling (to express the matter merely in terms of hard cash) if the Western Powers had acted on the principle that Christians "cannot retaliate."

[2] After this chapter was written it was reported in the Chinese and foreign press that a state of serious warfare broke out in the Miao country, and that several villages of Christian Miao were totally destroyed and their inhabitants rendered homeless. Christian chapels, with their beautiful stout pillars, are said to have been reduced to ashes.

sent our things to Haiku, twelve *li* away, and ourselves went on thirty *li* in the direction of Chaotung, to call on the *tumu* mentioned above. *He was not at home, but in hiding somewhere for his misdeeds.* However, we saw his steward and spoke a good word for the Christians, which we hope will have a good effect, and went back to Haiku.[1]

Doubtless as soon as the coast was clear the *tumu* breathed freely once more and crept out of his hiding-place.

[1] *China's Millions*, Sept., 1909, p. 141.

CHAPTER VII

REVIVALIST METHODS IN CHINA

EVERY one is familiar—through the newspapers, if not through personal experience—with those remarkable religious movements known as Revivals. The meetings or services held by preachers who adopt revivalist methods are usually characterised by extraordinary outbursts of religious fervour. Wailings and sobbings and confessions of sin, heart-broken appeals to the Deity for mercy and forgiveness, triumphant exclamations of thankfulness on the part of the "converted" and "saved," burst forth at intervals from one stricken soul after another. Nor do the waves of religious emotion immediately sink back to their normal level. We have heard how in some of the great centres of British industry—such as the mining districts of South Wales—revival meetings have resulted in moral awakenings that appear to have partially transformed the character of a considerable section of the working population. We hear of a temporary desertion of public-houses, an increased tenderness and harmony in home life, a new and healthy interest in literature and politics, and an undreamt-of cheerfulness and zeal in the performance of the daily round of toil. In a great number of cases—though it is almost impossible to get reliable statistics—there is a gradual return to the old way of living as the

flood of spiritual or emotional energy slowly subsides[1]; but there is no reason to doubt that a considerable number of those who have passed through the crisis of "conversion" have undergone a reformation of their moral nature that in some cases is permanent.[2]

Many Europeans may be interested, if only from the psychological point of view, to learn that the Chinese are by no means so phlegmatic and prosaic as to be proof against the influences of emotional religion; but whether revivals among Chinese Christians are likely to do more good than harm is a debatable question. That they may do some good in certain cases I have little doubt; that they are also liable to do harm, especially in the case of children, is, I believe, no less true. The whole subject deserves to be fully and seriously considered, in all its bearings, by competent and well-educated persons, among whom revival preachers are not always, unfortunately, to be classed.

Full descriptions of the Chinese and Manchurian revival of 1909 may be found in various issues of *China's Millions*. An address by the Rev. James Webster appears in the June number. He begins by referring to what I suppose may be called the spiritual and intellectual harmony among missionaries that is, apparently, one of the happy results of a successful revival. He alludes to the fact that the foreign missionaries in Manchuria include Scotsmen, Irishmen, and Danes, and that, during the conferences which they have held annually or oftener during the past

[1] "The Congregational, Baptist, Welsh Independents, and Calvinistic Methodist bodies, in their yearly handbooks for 1910, report decreases in membership, due to the continued reaction from the Welsh revival."—*North China Daily News*, Feb. 10, 1910.

[2] For an interesting account of the "conversion" of St. Augustine, see Harnack's *Confessions of St. Augustine*, pp. 164 *seq.* (Williams and Norgate, 1901.)

quarter of a century, "we have never had just what we could call unanimity on any subject whatever." From this remark it appears that for twenty-five years these Christian teachers were in the habit of meeting periodically to discuss how they might best carry out their work of evangelising the heathen, yet in spite of their Master's precepts that they should be loving and charitable and bear one another's burdens, they never succeeded in discussing a single subject on which they were able to come to a harmonious agreement! This is strange and significant enough in itself, and comment seems unnecessary. Passing this by, we learn next that "our brother Mr. Goforth came among us—or, rather, he was sent to us," and that owing apparently to the joint labours of the Holy Ghost and Mr. Goforth this unhappy state of dissension among missionaries came to an end, at least for the time being. The revival movement, however, did not affect only the missionaries. The Rev. Mr. Webster tells us that the total (Protestant) Church membership in Manchuria at this time amounted to about 20,000 souls. What the number of Roman Catholics might be is not stated; they, indeed, are hardly regarded as Christians at all,[1] some Protestant missionaries even going so far as to include them among the allies of Satan.[2] Of the 20,000 Protestant Christians many "had only a very slight conception," Mr. Webster admits, "of what Christianity meant." The remainder of his paper is taken up with accounts of the extraordinary things that took place at the meetings. To avoid the possibility of misrepresentation I quote,

[1] Some missionaries definitely distinguish between *Christianity* and *Romanism* (see *e. g.* F. W. Baller's *Mandarin Primer* [4th ed., 1900], p. 221; and *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 95).

[2] See below, p. 156.

here as elsewhere, the precise words used by my authority:

I felt for many years that the Chinese were so stolid and so unresponsive to anything of the kind, that they really did not understand what sin was and what guilt was; but the movement that came upon us showed that the Holy Spirit could open men's eyes to a realisation of sin in a wonderful way. It was certainly something very wonderful to see—sometimes as many as a thousand men and women broken down utterly, weeping the most absolutely sincere and bitter tears for sin. There is a little place in the Mukden pulpit where our native pastor knelt, and for days that little place was just a pool of water as he knelt with the tears rolling down his face. I have seen that church night after night literally watered with the tears of penitent souls. When we went down into the villages where there were no boards on the floor, nothing but just the earth, before the meetings closed those floors would be simply mud floors from the tears of those bitterly penitent souls.[1]

Of a recent revival in Foochow we are told in another journal that

hundreds would be on their faces before God at one time. Confessions, prayers for forgiveness, restitution, tears, sobs, agonising prayer for friends, songs of praise or victory, pleading, invitations—all could be heard at one time, but with all there was the utmost order. The spirit of prayer was wonderful. One could not be in the church a moment and not be praying for some one. Sin, as our Chinese Christians had never known it before, was revealed in those meetings.[2]

It will be noticed that "sin" is spoken of as if it were a kind of rich and rare joy.[3] The confession of

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 84.

[2] *Woman's Work in the Far East*, Dec., 1909, p. 164.

[3] "I have never heard Chinese Christians giving such wonderful testi-

sin is, of course, always a main feature of revivals. Some confessions are delightfully naïve. "One confessed to hatred of the foreigners, and one said he had called the young Chinese pastor a hypocrite."[1] Another man, a Chinese B.A., "confessed to seeking name and gain."[2] One repentant evil-doer gave the congregation this little glimpse into his character: "Up to the time of the revival I thought myself the best; now I know I am the worst of sinners"; while another confessed: "Whenever I could I shirked coming to God's house; now I love it."[3] Reading between the lines of some of the revival narratives one may occasionally find a hint that many people (especially children) confess their sins merely because others are doing so, and because they have caught the contagion of emotional excitement; and such young people are often hard put to it to think of anything definite to confess. For example, at a girls' school "we heard a great sound of weeping, for all the thirty-nine girls were weeping. At length confessions were made, but much on the same pattern, and it is hard to know if the work was deep."[4] Some of the sins that are confessed amid much sobbing and wailing are such that one would have

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monies. They all said they had never known what sin was before, nor had any idea of the Holy Spirit's power in their hearts. Elder Cheo, an old faithful elder, who had received a great blessing, rose and gave his testimony. He said that he had been in the Church since the beginning, but that he had never seen such a time nor ever received such blessing; and, turning to his brother elder, he said, 'I have heard Elder Ling making confession of sins at this time that I am sure the Courts of China could not make him confess.' And the attitude of the old man as he stood there bubbling over with joy reminded us of old Simeon's attitude and words after he had seen the Child Jesus."—*China's Millions*, May, 1909, p. 74.

[1] *China's Millions*, May, 1909, p. 178.

[2] *The Chinese Recorder*, Oct., 1909., p. 594.

[3] *Ibid.*, Dec., 1909, p. 729.

[4] *Ibid.*, Oct., 1909, p. 594.

thought it hardly worth while to make a fuss about them, but a sense of the infinite wickedness of the smallest peccadillo is regarded as one of the marks of the true convert. The Rev. Mr. Goforth, in one of his revivalist addresses, refers to the grave sins perpetrated by his unregenerate fellow-Canadians. In Canada, he says, "dances, cards, and theatres everywhere prevail." The Chinese have evidently inherited the divine grace that the Canadians by their moral turpitude have forfeited, for Mr. Goforth proceeds to observe that "the Spirit of God in China speaks right out and makes these men cry out in agony because of these things, and they quit them."[1] Dancing, I may say in passing, is not exactly what one might call a very prevalent vice in China; and if the Chinese in the treaty ports are heard to "cry out" when they behold European ladies and gentlemen indulging themselves in that form of wickedness, it is possible that their shrieks result rather from astonishment than from agony. It is rather interesting to learn from Mr. Goforth that some of the penitent Chinese who are impelled by the Holy Spirit to confess their sins at revivals have been known to confess their neighbours' sins as well. "Two medical assistants," he says, "nearly pulled each other's hair off, because one, in confessing her sins, confessed the other person's sins too. *That is always a dangerous thing to do.*"[2] It is pleasant to find that there is one matter, at least, on which hearty concurrence with Mr. Goforth is possible.

There is a point with regard to some of these confessions that is worth notice. When a Western or Chinese onlooker suggests to a Christian missionary that his flock of converts are not always men of good

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 94.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 95.

character, the missionary usually shows a great deal of irritation. Some missionaries, indeed, go so far as to discredit beforehand any evidence of moral depravity that may be brought against their converts. It must naturally startle them severely, therefore, when the converts themselves—moved by an emotional impulse —confess to the very sins of which their foreign teachers were ready to asseverate, in a court of law if necessary, that they could not possibly be guilty.

> The confessions of sin [says one account], the crying, sobbing, and the extreme agony of not a few began and continued for two days. And what confessions they made! We were struck with amazement. They confessed to murderous intention, adultery, opium-eating, stealing, deceiving, lying, pride, hatred, jealousy, covetousness, indolence, hypocrisy. What awful revelations! it was difficult to believe our ears, to hear preachers, elders, Church leaders, and members making confession of sins we thought they had given up long ago.[1]

An experience of this kind should have at least one excellent effect: it should teach the missionaries that their own estimates of the character of their converts are not always reliable, and that the heathen who accuse the Christians of vice or crime are not, of necessity, guilty of malicious slander.

But this is a matter of comparatively small importance. Graver questions are suggested by a scrutiny of the accounts given us of these recent Chinese revivals, and they are questions to which I hope satisfactory answers may speedily be forthcoming. On several occasions the penitents are stated to have made confessions not merely of relatively small shortcomings, like some of those just mentioned, but also of grave

[1] *China's Millions*, May, 1909, p. 74.

criminal acts for which the law exacts heavy punishment. A paragraph by the Rev. Mr. Goforth, headed "Soul Agony," begins with these words: "But the fearful agony of some! They would fling themselves on the platform! One poor fellow said: 'I poisoned my mother and my younger brother.' That was before he was converted. The awful thought agonised him."[1] No wonder it agonised him. The question is, however, did he, having made his public confession of murder, give himself up to justice? Or did his missionary friends decide to protect him? Or was the matter simply ignored? On these points we are not enlightened.[2] What is naturally intensely disagreeable to a "heathen Chinee" who happens to be jealous of his country's honour, is the thought that Western readers may very reasonably conclude from statements of this kind that murder and other great crimes can be committed in China with impunity—as though it were only the light of Christianity that can save a nation from chronic rapine and slaughter. Chinese magistrates may have grave faults, but they do not hold human life in contempt, and they do not, if they can help it, let murder go unpunished. A Chinese official who allowed a matricide to go free would be ruined for life, socially and officially. It will be noticed that in referring to this particular case the pious chronicler is careful to explain that the murders took place before

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 95.

[2] The only light that the Rev. Mr. Goforth throws on them atter is contained in these words: "Sins committed before conversion, fully confessed, and forsaken on conversion, are under the Blood and are forgiven. God has forgotten them, and it is not for us to resurrect them: that is a thing settled" (*Chinese Millions*, July, 1909, p. 111). Thus it appears that the omniscient Deity "forgets" things that are "under the Blood," whatever that remarkable phrase may imply. But the police would not forget them, either in Canada, England, or China.

the man became a Christian. It would be interesting to know what length of time elapsed between the commission of the crimes and the conversion to Christianity, and whether there was any causal connection between the two events. It is only necessary to add that if it were to become publicly known that the mission to which this man belonged was knowingly harbouring a matricide, it would be difficult to estimate the possible seriousness of the ultimate consequences.

If this were a unique case, one might suppose that, amid the noise of praying and sobbing that characterise a revival meeting, the exact nature of the man's confession had been misunderstood; but unfortunately it is not unique. We are told that at one place two non-Christian Chinese soldiers, who had merely attended the meeting out of curiosity, "confessed that they were murderers." The same account goes on to say that "our innocent-faced house-boy, whom we thought so good, was not only an adulterer but a murderer. A sobbing, broken man gasped out that he had killed two men. Yet another confessed to the brutal murder of a nephew."[1] Elsewhere we are told that at a Mukden meeting there was present a prominent native Presbyterian Christian—a man of such good report in missionary circles that he had been made a Church elder.

He looked splendid. He was dressed in his very best, and wore a big gold ring and a big gold bracelet. He was a very prominent man. He had been sent down to a young men's conference at Shanghai. . . . Suddenly this elder—

[1] *The Revival in Manchuria*, by the Rev. J. Webster (London: Morgan and Scott). For examples of other confessions to murder, see *The Chinese Recorder*, Oct., 1909, p. 593; and *China's Millions*, March, 1909, p. 38.

this splendid-looking man—rushed forward and sprang on the platform and cried out: "Give *me* a chance. . . . The Devil has taken me as an elder and tied me right here at the church door, and I have hindered every one from coming into the kingdom. Three times I tried to poison my wife. [She screamed out in agony.] If the Lord spares me I will give a tithe of all I possess to Him." He thereupon took off his gold ring and bracelet, and fell in an agony to the floor. Instantly the whole company—seven or eight hundred people, men, women, and children—were in an agony. Now that mighty conviction is wrought by the Holy Spirit of God. No one can control it.[1]

A thought that may have occurred to many readers on perusing this passage is that the Spirit of God, besides impelling this splendid-looking elder to make this momentous confession, might also have done something to soften the blow for his wretched wife. There are probably few women—whether European or Chinese—who would have the nerve to listen unmoved to a public confession from her husband that he had thrice tried to kill her. The word "agony" appears to be a technical term among revivalists, and when we read that this poor creature "screamed out in agony," the plain meaning presumably is that she went into hysterics. The chief interest of the episode, be it noticed, is made to centre on the elder's confession and the splendid prodigality with which he surrenders his ornaments. The plight of his unhappy wife is merely referred to in parenthesis, as if it were of no particular consequence, and nothing is said as to the measures adopted to soothe or console her after the cruel shock caused by her heartless husband's sudden access of pious frankness. Nor are we told whether

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 110.

the would-be murderer was allowed to retain his position as a Church elder.

The last case of this kind which I propose to cite presents several features of unusual interest. It is reported in full by Mr. A. R. Saunders in the following words:

A woman stood up in the audience and, with weeping, confessed to many quarrels with her husband—a heathen—when she would even tear his eyes and face till blood came. On the last day of the Mission this same woman came to the platform and, with real, deep sorrow, confessed to adultery, and in connection with this confession we have the greatest evidence of God's power I have yet seen. Her husband, a notoriously bad character, was in the audience for some reason or other, and heard her make this confession. While we were at dinner the evangelist came to tell me that the husband was greatly enraged about this confession, and had gone on the street to buy opium which he intended giving to his wife that she might end her own life. The evangelist urged me to see the man on his return and exhort him to desist from his evil intention; but I said to him: "Cannot God, who made the woman confess her sin, protect her from man's evil designs? We can only pray." We did pray, and when I went out to the hall to commence the afternoon meeting, the evangelist met me with the words: "What the pastor said is right, for there is nothing like prayer." He then told me that when the man was on the street, before he had bought the opium, he became very troubled about his own sins, and returned to the hall without doing what he had intended. On his return he told the people that God had been showing him what a great sinner he had been, and he would confess his sins at the afternoon meeting. He was the second person to come to the platform that afternoon and confess to God that he had been a very great sinner. In the evening he was on the platform again and was more explicit. He then confessed to ten great sins, amongst which were highway

robbery, murder, adultery, opium-smoking, and gambling, but he said he had now decided to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and leave his old life. This experience of God's power filled all with awe at the majesty of the Lord.[1]

There are several points in this interesting narrative to which I should like to draw my readers' attention. It may be noticed, in the first place, that the woman was a Christian, while her husband—until his conversion on this occasion—was a heathen. This in itself is a significant fact, and is somewhat inconsistent with the common Western view that, in China, women are the down-trodden slaves of tyrannical husbands. I am not sure that even the average English husband might not betray some annoyance on learning from his wife that she had embraced a new religion introduced from "foreign parts." However, the woman's Christianity did not prevent her, according to her own confession, from tearing her husband's eyes and face till the blood came. Evidently the heathen husband kept his temper under control to an extent that was unapproachable by the Christian wife. Having admitted that she was a bad-tempered wife, the woman then went on to confess herself guilty of adultery. There is nothing to show whether the moral lapse took place before or after she had become a Christian, so this point need not be pressed; but she showed a reprehensible lack of consideration for her husband's feelings in making this disgraceful confession in public. She could not have chosen a less advantageous moment for the fulfilment of her purpose; for her husband, though not a Christian, was "for some reason or other" present in the audience, and was therefore under the painful necessity of hearing his wife make her public acknow-

[1] *China's Millions*, Aug., 1909, p. 125.

ledgment of frailty. Now I think I am not likely to be contradicted when I say that there is no man in the world who would care to see his wife stand up and confess before a crowded audience that she was a bad woman and he himself a cuckold. Certainly I can answer for my own countrymen's views on the matter when I declare that a more utterly scandalous proceeding than that here narrated could hardly present itself to the Chinese imagination. My reader will have no difficulty in realising the delicacy of the situation. The audience evidently included a large number of men and women, many of whom must have been neighbours of the husband and wife into whose painful domestic secrets we have been allowed to penetrate, and some of whom (like the husband himself) were non-Christians. The husband, therefore, could not reasonably hope that full reports of his wife's confession would not speedily become the common talk of his social circle. There are multitudes of Chinese husbands who would take their own lives rather than bear the "loss of face" that this would entail.[1] The narrative which we are considering does not explain whether the couple were sitting together or apart, and it cannot therefore be explained why the husband did not forcibly prevent his wife from bringing scandal on his family by her extraordinary public declaration of incontinence. Mr. Saunders, however, was informed by the evangelist that the husband "was greatly enraged about this confession"—this

[1] It is well known that from the point of view of Chinese law (or legalised custom) the sanctity of the matrimonial bond is such that if a man finds his wife in the arms of a lover he is practically exonerated from all blame if in hot blood he immediately slays both culprits. To acquit himself of the guilt of murder it is necessary that he should kill both wife and lover, not one only. The reasons for this stipulation are fairly obvious.

was hardly to be wondered at—and "had gone on the street to buy opium" in order that his wife might commit suicide. In all probability the distracted man had hardly made up his mind as to whether the poison —presuming the opium story to be true—was to be administered to himself or to his wife. The passages that follow are the most extraordinary in the whole narrative. "The evangelist urged me to see the man on his return and exhort him to desist from his evil intention." There is something mysterious here. Did the evangelist or Mr. Saunders suppose that the husband, having bought his opium, and having unaccountably allowed it to be generally known to what murderous use he intended to put it, would return to the meeting and force his wife to consume it there and then? Is it not more natural to suppose that he would take it home and await his wife's return? However this may be, Mr. Saunders evidently regarded the course recommended by the evangelist as unnecessary. He declined to exhort the husband against committing murder, and apparently it did not occur to him as in any way desirable that he should take active measures to ensure the woman's safety; though all that was necessary was to send a message to the local magistrate to inform him that a murder was likely to take place within his jurisdiction unless prompt steps were taken to prevent it. Missionaries have been often accused of interference with the administration of Chinese law —and the accusation is not a groundless one; but this was a case in which an intimation to the *yamên* would not only have been permissible but was an obvious public duty. Mr. Saunders, however, did not regard the matter in that light; he merely pointed out that God, who had made the woman confess her adultery, could also save her from the evil designs of her husband.

"We can only pray," he said. This view of the efficacy of prayer deserves the closest attention. If one were to ask Mr. Saunders why he and his fellow-missionaries come to China to convert the heathen, seeing that the prayers of Christians at home should be able to effect the purpose with equal success and much more economically, one would be told, no doubt, that the divine power is exerted through human agencies, or that God has asked for the personal help of his people and must be obeyed. Yet it was apparently assumed—though we are not told on what grounds—that in the case we are now considering, prayer alone would do all that was necessary. If Mr. Saunders, in the course of his evangelistic wanderings, were to come across a robber hacking a fallen wayfarer to death, would he rush to the victim's rescue or would he kneel down and pray for him? Merely to be asked such a question would seem to most men a gross insult, but in view of his attitude in the case of the woman whose life was threatened by her outraged husband one cannot be sure of how Mr. Saunders's answer would be framed. As things turned out—whether as a result of Mr. Saunders's prayers or owing to some less mysterious cause—the husband, fortunately, did not put his alleged intention into execution. While on his way to buy the opium he became much disturbed in mind about his own sins, and returned to the prayer-meeting to confess them; and on the evening of that day he "confessed to ten great sins, amongst which were highway robbery, murder, adultery, opium-smoking, and gambling." English and American bridge-players will perhaps be rather shocked to find their own little weakness classed among such crimes as murder and highway robbery, and perhaps it is just as well that five out of this bold bad man's ten sins are not mentioned by name; but what chiefly

concerns us here is that once more we are left in ignorance as to whether this robber and cut-throat gave himself up forthwith to the local authorities, or whether he bribed his neighbours to keep the matter of the confession a dead secret. In the latter event, how did he arrange matters with his new missionary friends, with whom the awkward responsibility of harbouring a murderer would henceforth rest?

CHAPTER VIII

EMOTIONAL RELIGION

IT will be observed that, according to the universal testimony of revivalists, the peculiar phenomena so vividly described in these quotations are the direct result of the workings of the Holy Ghost. If one venture to suggest any other explanation of the manifestations, such as emotional instability or some form of psychological automatism, one is of course regarded as a wicked cynic or as morally corrupt. Those, indeed, who attend a revival meeting but are unable to work themselves into the appropriate state of "agony" are regarded as being in no small spiritual peril. Referring to the "opposition" offered by some sceptical or unemotional church members to the beneficent action of the Divine Spirit at some of these meetings, a missionary writes thus: "Opposition here as at Tsingkiangpu, but it all had to give way before the mighty power of God; but some at all places did resist throughout, and for these we tremble. May God yet have mercy."[1] The "yet" seems to indicate a foreboding of the worst. Sometimes, indeed, these unfortunate sinners receive on earth a foretaste of the punishments presumably reserved for them in the hereafter. "The majority of the students," says one account, "so resisted the Spirit that at night some

[1] A. R. Saunders, in *China's Millions*, Aug., 1909, p. 125.

became unconscious in consequence," others "were stretched on the ground, having tried to hide from the majesty of the Lord."[1]

Most of the revivalists consider that their own explanation of the phenomena is the simplest and most natural, and should therefore be accepted in preference to a merely psychological explanation that involves the use of long words and mysterious pathological terms. "It is so much easier to believe," they say, "that it is all due to the Holy Spirit. Why not believe and be thankful?" Certainly those who believe in the miraculous nature of the emotional disturbances at revivals have made the Holy Ghost responsible for a multitude of quaint happenings.

Yesterday we had a wonderful day, even in these days of blessings. The meetings lasted altogether between ten and eleven hours, and in the afternoon there was the most powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence and power I have yet witnessed. The conviction was so deep that the whole congregation of Christians and the inquirers cried out in very agony for a long time. The noise could be heard a long way off, and neighbours came round the place to inquire what had happened. I had to leave the platform and go among the people, or rather, the schoolboys, who were specially in agony, to try to comfort them, by quoting promises of God in their ears. It was only by shouting in their ears that they could be made to hear. The people and boys were only conscious of the presence of God, and the most abject confessions of sin were made to Him, pleading pitifully for forgiveness. Some women who were not believers became terrified and rushed out of the chapel.[2]

Similar narratives are very numerous, and in every

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Oct., 1909, p. 593.
[2] *China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 31.

case we are assured that the active agent is none other than God the Holy Ghost. "Belief in endorsement by the 'Holy Ghost,'" as a recent writer truly observes, "is an old source of trouble, and has always been the cause of much over-belief and excessive assertion."[1] When we inquire into the circumstances of "conversion" we find that what appears to be the most essential condition of this remarkable experience is not a belief in the doctrines of Christianity—in which, indeed, the subject may perhaps take but a meagre interest—but an emotional temperament of a peculiar psychological order. Prof. William James, in his masterly examination of the whole subject, cites with approval certain conclusions arrived at by Prof. Coe, which are worth quoting.

> If you should expose to a converting influence a subject in whom three factors unite: first, pronounced emotional sensibility; second, tendency to automatisms; and third, suggestibility of the passive type; you might then safely predict the result: there would be a sudden conversion, a transformation of the striking kind.[2]

Now Prof. James himself, who, as every one knows, was very far from being a foe to religion, freely admits that the important thing about "conversions" is the reality of their effects. He is personally inclined to trace the phenomena to what is now known to psychologists as the subliminal self, but he says that "just as our primary wideawake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a

[1] John Page Hopps, in *The Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1908, p. 185.
[2] *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (10th impr.), p. 241.

subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking life might close a door which in the dreamy subliminal might remain ajar or open."[1] This theory may or may not be correct,[2] but most of us will at any rate be inclined to agree with Prof. James, that if the ethical results of "conversion" are of high permanent value to the individual who experiences them revivalism is *pro tanto* justified. "If the *fruits for life* of the state of conversion are good, we ought to idealise and venerate it, even though it be a piece of natural psychology; if not, we ought to make short work with it, no matter what supernatural being may have infused it."[3] There was once a worthy Englishman known as Billy Bray—described by Prof. James, who quotes this incident, as "an excellent little illiterate English evangelist"—whose post-conversion feelings were described by himself thus: "I can't help praising the Lord. As I go along the street, I lift up one foot, and it seems to say 'Glory'; and I lift up the other, and it seems to say 'Amen'; and so they keep up like that all the time I am walking."[4] Now if a quaint little confession like this provokes a smile, surely it should not be a smile either of scorn or of cynicism. If it really seemed to Billy Bray that his feet were endowed with the power of uttering pious ejaculations, the thought no doubt helped to make him a happier and better man. In attributing the miracle to the Holy Ghost he may have been in error, but if the belief was to him a real source of moral strength it would be unfair to treat it with contempt. At any rate, it was better that

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 242.

[2] Prof. Coe is one of those who adversely criticises it. See *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, p. 346.

[3] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 237. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

Billy's feet should teach themselves to say "Glory" and "Amen"—however meaningless those isolated observations might be—than that the devil should get them into the habit of murmuring alternate blasphemies, perhaps thereby filling Billy's mind with thoughts of wickedness, and imperilling whatever was immortal in Billy's soul. Had he been an educated man he would perhaps have given expression to his experience in words nearer to those of Keble, who tells us, in charming verse, of those

> "Who carry music in their heart,
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart . . .
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."[1]

But while we admit the possible advantages derived by Billy Bray and others like him from their conversion experiences, we are by no means bound to give our adherence to the crude theory that "conversion" is, as a matter of literal fact, produced by the direct agency of the mysterious supernatural being known to Christians as the Third Person in the Trinity. The very fact that religious crises akin to those produced at revivals are not confined to Christianity may well make us hesitate before we accept the explanation that so completely satisfies revivalist preachers. The Hindu describes his experience as a realisation of oneness with Brahma; the Buddhist speaks of it as the attainment of Nirvana; the Christian declares that he is "one with Christ," or that he is "saved." The emotionalism is turned into one channel or another in accordance with the form in which the religious influence expresses itself.

[1] Keble's *Christian Year.*

Evangelical Protestantism lays enormous stress on the sense of guilt and sin; no one, apparently, can become "converted" until an overwhelming consciousness of moral depravity has taken possession of his whole nature. "My emotional nature," says one of Starbuck's subjects,[1] "was stirred to its depths; confessions of depravity and pleading with God for salvation from sin made me oblivious of all surroundings." Roman Catholicism, in practice if not in theory, takes a less gloomy view of man's moral nature than is countenanced by Calvinism, and the man who goes through the experience of "conversion" under Catholic influences will probably be filled with real happiness by some radiant vision, perhaps of the glorified Virgin herself.[2] The "converted" Catholic, again, will probably lay stress on the ineffable joy that his experience has brought him, and in this way his "conversion" may be a means of brightening not only his own life, but also the lives of others. Theoretically, "conversion" brings joy also to the more sober-minded Calvinistic Protestant, but the Calvinist, we all know is fond of adding to his pleasures a pinch of the salt of gloom, and it must be confessed that he is generally too seriously concerned about the state of his neighbours' souls to be much in the habit of adding joy to their lives. A certain Nova Scotian evangelist, who after conversion became a noted preacher, was evidently one of those rather dismal-minded persons who think that the Evil One is never far away from scenes of fun and jollity. "On Wednesday, the 12th," he wrote in his diary, "I preached at a wedding, and had the happiness thereby to be the means of excluding

[1] Quoted by Prof. W. James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 249.

[2] For an example of such a case see Prof. W. James, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

carnal mirth."[1] One wonders whether he was ever asked to preach at a wedding again. The man who obtains happiness for himself by chilling the mirth of others would perhaps have conferred a favour on his fellow-creatures by remaining unconverted, or at least staying away from all ceremonial gatherings other than funerals. Many Protestant missionaries deny, as we have seen, that the Church of Rome is under divine guidance at all. They *know*, as a matter of immediate personal experience, that God is with them, and as they themselves are at variance with the Catholics in several important matters of faith they presume that he cannot be on the side of Rome also. Yet are they not a little unwise to accept their own "immediate knowledge" as infallible? Absolute "knowledge," as distinct from mere theory or belief, is the possession of every mystic: yet mystics differ among themselves as to the content of their knowledge. Cardinal Newman was quite confident that he was (to use his own words) "divinely guided" through life. Mohammed in Arabia and the Bab in Persia—to mention two non-Christian names only—possessed similar "knowledge" that they occupied, with regard to the Deity, a peculiar position of august privilege. What Socrates called his "daimon" would in all probability have been called the Holy Ghost if he had lived a millennium or two later.

While not denying that revivalism may in some cases have had good and permanent results in China as well as in Western countries, I feel compelled to conclude, on the whole, that it would be well for my countrymen if Christian missionaries would not introduce revivalist methods into China. My chief reasons for this conclusion are these: In the first place, the emotional effects of the revivalist appeal are not always conducive

[1] Prof. W. James, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

to physical health, and sometimes there is produced a peculiar state of nervous instability, unaccompanied by any improvement in the moral nature. In the second place, I believe that the revivalists are gravely mistaken in their theory that the phenomena of "conversion" are brought about by the miraculous action of an invisible divine personage, and I have the same extreme objection to my countrymen being taught false doctrines about the spiritual world that I have to their being indoctrinated with false notions about any branch of science or philosophy. Even if it could be shown that such false spiritual doctrines might in some cases be productive of great and permanent moral benefit, I should be glad, on the whole, to see the Chinese denying themselves the chance of sharing in those benefits, and devoting their energies unfalteringly to the single-minded pursuit of truth. When a representative body of competent psychologists have thoroughly investigated the whole subject of "conversion" and emotional religion, and have unanimously declared that the direct action of a personal Deity is clearly the only hypothesis that will explain all the facts, it will then become my duty to sacrifice my own provisional conclusions; but I see no likelihood at present that the sacrifice will ever require to be made.

But it is to the influence of revivalism on China's children that I am anxious to draw special attention. Adults are, or should be, able to look after themselves: children, all the world over, are as soft clay in the hands of those who are entrusted with their education. If my readers will attentively consider the following descriptions of how Western revivalists (according to their own accounts) have been playing on the emotions of helpless and ignorant Chinese children, I think some, at least, will agree with me that this part of my appeal

to the generosity and forbearance of the Western public who support the work of Christian missions in China is not wholly without justification.

A paragraph headed "Sweet Music in the Roof" appears in the course of the Rev. J. Webster's address, from which I have already quoted. The paragraph describes how during a revival meeting

> thirty or forty poor girls broke down on the platform in a terrible state of weeping. I felt that really we ought to get them out, and so I, with one or two others, lifted or led those poor broken-hearted girls out of the church into an adjoining room, where they were dealt with. It was delightful to hear this one and the next one whispering, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." It was just like an old-fashioned inquiry room at home. But when I went into the church a little afterwards, the pastor said to me: "Mr. Webster, perhaps you thought you did right in taking those girls out, but I do not think so." He said: "You know, a little crying will do them no harm. They will come all right by and by." Then his face gleamed. He was a very sane man. There was no excitement about him. There was no hysteria about him—do not make any mistake—and what he said was this: "When they were crying there I heard sweet music in the roof, but as soon as you took them away the music ceased." He never looked more solemn in his life, and I believe that he did hear music in the roof that I did not hear, and that he and others saw things that I did not see, and that was their blessing. What I mean to say is this: That it does not do for human hands to interfere too much when the Holy Spirit is working in men's hearts. It is a wonderful thing.[1]

I think it best to make no comment on this. The effect of the passage on my readers will no doubt vary in accordance with each one's temperament and mental

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 85.

attitude. In the same journal the Rev. J. Goforth gives an account of his revivalist experiences in Chang-tê-fu at a missionary establishment which contained two schools—for boys and girls respectively. After remarking that the lady-principal of the girls' school "broke down" at a prayer-meeting, he adds that

next morning her seventy-five girls were swept as by a tempest; they were in fearful agony for an hour. Every sin that had been hindering their lives was confessed—little thefts, carelessness, backbiting, and all manner of sins that had crept into their young lives were confessed. On the third day the head teacher of the boys' school was very much broken down on the platform and confessed his failings in the school. On the fourth night, just as we came out of our English prayer-meeting, we heard as if all the voices in the girls' school yard were going at once. Afterwards we heard that they were all praying for the boys' school. It was on the other side of the yard. There were seventy-five boys. Just at that very time the Spirit of God was coming with irresistible conviction, and those boys were weeping and falling down everywhere.[1]

In a later address by the same energetic revivalist we are told of a prayer-meeting in another boys' school, at which

suddenly one boy got up and confessed sin and immediately broke down. Then the whole school was moved. The leader tried to sing. The boys paid no heed to him, and after about an hour he came in to me. I was preparing an address for the next day, on "Quench not the Spirit." I went into the schoolroom. Those boys were in agony. Their feet were going. Their hands were pounding the desks; they were all trembling, and crying at the top of their voices. And this had been going on for about an

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 93.

hour. I saw one boy get up and go over to another, and I heard him say: "One day I told a lie about you. Forgive me." Another lad went over to a companion and said: "I stole your pencil." Another said: "That time I fought with you I hated you; please forgive me." The boys were all confessing. I called the teachers in. We attempted to sing. The boys paid no heed whatever to us. They did not seem to hear us at all. I rang the school bell as loudly as I could. But still the boys went on. Then I walked over to a desk where there was a heap of slates and shook them. Gradually I gained the attention of the boys, and, having done so, spoke a few comforting words to them and told them to go to bed. But what a glorious change there was in those lads the next day! Twenty-three of them were baptised on the following Sunday. It might be said: "Surely they should have had six months' probation." They did not need it. Forty-three girls and boys were admitted into the Church through baptism on the following Sunday.[1]

There are two points about this piteous narrative that seem to demand some explanation. In the first place, if Mr. Goforth was under the sincere belief that these children were all undergoing spiritual treatment by the Holy Ghost, why did he presume to interrupt the good work by ringing bells, singing hymns, and rattling slates? In the second place, what were the circumstances of the baptisms that took place on the following Sunday? Were the boys' parents informed of the proposed baptisms before they took place, or was the approval of mere heathen parents considered unnecessary?

Later on we learn, in connection with another school, that

all those boys slipped to their knees, and the girls likewise. They were weeping and confessing all over the

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 107.

room. The doctor, who had been attending at the hospital, and was returning from the outside, as he drew near the building, heard the noise and thought there must be an express train coming rapidly from the south. Then, as he came nearer, the sound seemed like some mighty wind blowing from the north. Not until he got right up to the church door did he locate the tumult as inside the church. Men, women, and children were all melted before the Lord.[1]

One is inclined to surmise that perhaps the arrival of the doctor was opportunely timed, and that for the next few hours he may have found his hands full.

In another missionary journal we read thus of a children's revival meeting in a girls' school at Nanking:

It began among the smaller girls, without any prompting or even knowledge of the teachers, until it was noticed a few of the smaller children were absenting themselves from the regular meals, who [*sic*] when questioned said: "We cannot eat. We must pray." At first they were absent from but one meal, but later it was quite common for a number to eat only one meal a day.

One vaguely wonders whether it was supposed to be a good thing for the health of growing girls that they should have only one meal a day; or whether it was taken for granted that an ample spiritual diet fully compensated for the lack of the grosser kinds of food. This account goes on to tell us that the girls

would go to bed, but being unable to sleep would get up and dress and come into the meeting. At different times during the night great power was manifested, weeping and conviction for sin, confessions one to another, and making up of little quarrels. Some of us who were not in the meeting, but in another house, felt the power very much,

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 108.

but could do nothing but pray. A small girl, thirteen years old, was the leader, if we may speak of any person as leader.[1]

These poor girls were supposed to be capable of doing without a normal night's sleep, just as they could go without proper food. It seems not unlikely that physical hunger was one of the causes that banished sleep and produced the restlessness that their teachers mistook for the mysterious promptings of the Holy Ghost. The "power" that was felt by persons in another house, and so affected them that they "could do nothing but pray," is interesting as being suggestive of a kind of telepathy. "These little children," continues the narrative, "who regularly eat three meals a day and go to bed at 6.30, for ten days or more averaged less than two meals, and were in meeting until midnight or after without any perceptible inconvenience." Any temporary or permanent injury that was being done to the children's health or development would not necessarily be immediately perceptible. This pathetic story concludes with a request that the children of England and America will join with these Chinese children *in prayer for the lost:* the "lost" being explained to mean "those who have not even heard." Perhaps it would have been well for the physical and intellectual health of these poor supperless and sleepless children if they, too, had never "heard."

Similar stories of revivalism among Chinese school children might be quoted in large numbers, but they are all of much the same character. The General Director of the China Inland Mission writes thus of a revival in the province of Anhui:

> There has been a revival amongst the schoolgirls of

[1] *Woman's Work in the Far East*, Sept., 1909, p. 129.

Ningkwofu; here, as elsewhere, the principal feature being a deep and true conviction of sin, followed by great peace and joy in the sense of forgiveness and cleansing. Miss Webster writes that after one or two of the meetings the floor of the room was literally wet with tears.[1]

A rather piteous case of child-conversion is described in a speech delivered by Mr. Orr-Ewing at St. James's Hall, London, in September, 1909:

Not only were the old blessed, but the young also were blessed. A little boy, only ten years of age, came to the last series of meetings which I attended before leaving China. This little fellow, as far as we knew, had heard the gospel only for a month or two. His grandmother had hindered him from coming to the chapel. He was one of our neighbours in the city of Kianfu. His grandmother was thoroughly opposed to us, and during her lifetime he could not come. This little boy came into the meeting, and so mightily did the Spirit of God convict him that he just knelt at the form and wept and wept. It was no ordinary weeping. He wept and wept until my heart was burdened for him, and I rose and went beside him and quoted a few words of Scripture to him. As I knelt beside him there I noticed, on the form, two little pools of tears the dear lad had wept as he cried before God under the conviction of sin.[2]

If the sins of a child of ten cause him to weep two pools of tears, we may ruefully speculate as to the number of lakes that would be formed by the tears of a sinner of forty. It is a relief, after harrowing stories of this kind, to be told of a bad little boy who apparently resisted all efforts at conversion, and "had to sit by himself several times during the year." He made so much noise, we are informed, "that his howls

[1] *China's Millions*, March, 1909, p. 37.
[2] *Ibid.*, Oct., 1909, p. 150.

could not be drowned by our united efforts at singing."[1] Possibly it is to the singing that we are to look for an explanation of the howling.

A recent English writer has remarked with truth that young people "need protection from 'religious' fanatics."[2] Will it become necessary for us Chinese to implore the Christian West to help us to save our children from its hysterical missionaries? The well-known Oxford philosophical writer, Mr. Henry Sturt, has uttered wise words concerning the undesirability of dosing children with religion.

A boy who manifests "deep love of souls" [he says], or labours under an oppressive sense of sin, or is very fond of church-going and ritual, or "loves Christ, who died for men," or has serious thoughts about the Atonement, or prays earnestly for the conversion of the benighted Jews, cannot be approved by those who understand child character. Early piety is quite a morbid phenomenon.[3]

Probably Mr. Sturt's striking book is not likely to be found in many missionary homes, but the recently expressed views of an able and sympathetic Anglican clergyman on this subject are surely entitled to be received, even by the missionaries, with respectful attention.

We do not want emotional religion for our boys [says the Rev. H. F. Peile]. We have all seen too much of the ready flood of tears, the passionate protestations of repentance and amendment so heartfelt, so fleeting. Only schoolmasters fully know, and this is not the place to enlarge on it, how strong and dangerous the emotional nature is during part of the school age. It seems odd, in

[1] *Woman's Work in the Far East*, Sept., 1909, p. 115.
[2] P. J. Blyth, in *Christianity and Tradition*, p. 210.
[3] *The Idea of a Free Church*, pp. 247–8.

the light of popular conceptions, but what most boys need, for a time at least, is to be kept manly, and wholesome, and prosaic.[1]

If even this testimony is not sufficient to convince unbiassed onlookers that religion of the revivalist type is not necessarily advantageous to the young, perhaps they may be influenced by the words of one who was once head master of one of the great public schools of England. "Emotional appeals and revivals," says this acknowledged authority, "do not destroy carnal sin in schools, and it is well known how often they seem to stimulate, to increase immorality."[2] It will be well for the children of China—perhaps for the children of Europe and America too—if the books from which these quotations are taken find their way into the hands of all those who are responsible for the training of the young and for the financing of missionary expeditions to heathen lands. Revivals will run the risk of growing dangerously unpopular in my country if it becomes generally known among the people that not only may they have a pernicious effect on the normal development of the moral nature, but are productive of avoidable unhappiness to children.

[1] See *Ecclesia Discens*, by the Rev. H. F. Peile, M.A. (Longmans, Green, & Co., 1909).

[2] The Ven. Archdeacon Wilson, D.D., formerly head master of Clifton College, quoted by Philip Vivian in *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), p. 264.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND A PERSONAL DEVIL

IT has been wisely said that to understand is to forgive —*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner;* that if from the point of view of absolute knowledge we could see all crime, all sin, all blemishes in any given human character, we should whisper no word of censure and utter no sentence of condemnation, but feel only an unutterable pity for those who had been crushed by the relentless wheels of universal law. But this is not man's way. Man has not yet attained to absolute knowledge, and man still censures and condemns. Is it God's way? The Christian—writhing in the meshes of his creed—is bound against his will to answer "No." God—the all-powerful, the omniscient, the all-good—sanctions the existence of evil and pain and condemns man for sins which his God-given nature and his God-given environment left him powerless to avoid. The devout Christian who is asked by his heathen brother to explain this mystery is apt to wax impatient.

That is an old story [he says]; unbelievers like you have put the difficulty to us a thousand times, and a thousand times have we told you that you must not judge the ways of God from your lowly human standpoint. God's ways are inscrutable, but you may rest assured that evil will in the long-run turn out to be good, or that it is the means selected by God to educate you and develop

your character, or that it is your punishment for your misuse of the divine gift of free-will.

So answers the Christian, and the poor heathen turns away uncomforted and unenlightened. If any truths whatever have emerged from the conflict of religious thought, surely this negative one is among them—that Christianity, whatever else it may have done, has not solved the problem of evil.[1]

Even a stalwart Christian apologist like Dr. Illingworth admits this. He mentions some of the conjectures that have been made on the subject, only to reject them. To declare "that evil is merely a negation, without substantive existence; or that it is a necessity of finite and relative being; or yet again that partial evil may be universal good"—does not, he says, really illuminate the problem. Probably its solution, he admits, "would involve the knowledge of things which we could not at present comprehend."[2]

Sometimes we are told that evil is a mere appearance, and that we shall know it to be a mere delusion as soon as we shall have arrived at the proper stage of spiritual and moral development. This view seems to be that taken by Prof. W. R. Inge, who states it clearly and succinctly.

The problem has been stated once for all in the words of Augustine: "Either God is unwilling to abolish evil, or

[1] "The problem of evil has exercised the mind of man from all time, and has never yet been solved. In our own day the solution *by theology* seems farther off than ever, now that the existence of the Devil is denied, while the law of prey and struggle for existence is admitted to be the Creator's own handiwork—to be his divine plan for the evolution of all living things. Surely we must admit the inherent cruelty of the process?"— Philip Vivian's *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), p. 181. See also pp. 180–8 of the same work; and Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*.

[2] *Reason and Revelation*, p. 223 (Macmillan & Co., 1906).

He is unable: if He is unwilling, He is not good; if He is unable, He is not omnipotent." No Christian can consent to impale himself on either horn of this dilemma. If God is not perfectly good, and also perfectly powerful, He is not God. It has indeed been argued lately by some Christian thinkers, such as Dr. Rashdall, that God is not omnipotent. Such a conclusion does credit to the consistency of a philosopher who is before all things a moralist; but it is so impossible to any religious man who is not defending a thesis, that it serves only to illustrate the weakness of the premises which led to such a conclusion. The only other alternative, if we refuse St. Augustine's dilemma, is to deny, to some degree, the absolute existence of evil, regarding it as an appearance incidental to the actualisation of moral purpose as vital activity. And in spite of the powerful objections which have been brought against this view, in spite of the real risk of seeming to attenuate, in theory, the malignant potency of sin, I believe that this is the theory which presents the fewest difficulties.[1]

Yet the difficulties which it does present are very formidable. For example, it ignores the undeniable fact that whether evil exists or not it undoubtedly seems to exist, and in this very seeming we are faced by a monstrous evil.[2] Moreover, if evil has no real

[1] *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 183–4.

[2] This and allied subjects have been dealt with in a masterly way by one of the most distinguished, as he is one of the most lucid, of modern philosophical writers. I refer to Dr. Ellis McTaggart, and especially to his remarkable work, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, pp. 208 *seq.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1906). Explaining why he regards the theory of the unreality of evil as untenable, he says: "Supposing that it could be proved that all that we think evil was in reality good, the fact would still remain that we think it evil. This may be called a delusion or a mistake. But a delusion or a mistake is just as *real* as anything else. . . . The delusion that evil exists, then, is real. But then, to me at least, it seems certain that a delusion or an error which hid from us the goodness of the universe would itself be evil. And so there would be real evil after all," etc.

existence, but is merely one of the shadows cast by an unreal world, what—according to Christianity—becomes of the damned? Do they also dissolve into the mists of unreality, or must we accept the pessimistic conclusion that the Absolute finds room in its capacious bosom for the disagreeable presence of an eternal and self-existent hell? If so, it is false to say that good is destined to be the final goal of ill. In the existence of a permanent hell there will always be a standing proof of good's partial defeat.

As regards the undesirable evil of physical pain, some apologists declare that pain is really beneficent, as it warns us that we are disregarding the laws that regulate physical health and is a means of saving our lives. This view will hardly appear quite satisfactory to one who is in the grip of a horrible and incurable disease such as hydrophobia or cancer, and in any case we are still left to speculate as to why no other method could have been devised by an omnipotent God than that of prodding us with knives every time we wandered off the paths that lead to health. A recent writer is so bold as to assert that "we may then exclude pain, as Nature's life-warden, from the category of evil,"[1] but this statement has not been allowed to pass unchallenged.

> Of course [says one of his critics], pain often prevents greater evil—very frequently this greater evil is simply greater pain, but not always. And in this case it is better to have the pain than to have the consequences of its absence. But this gives no ground whatever for asserting that the pain in question is not evil, although it may, the world being what it is, be the only alternative to a worse evil.[2]

[1] Prof. A. T. Ormond's *Concepts of Philosophy*, p. 537.

[2] *Mind*, July, 1907, p. 435.

Christian Science is crude enough in its speculations, but at any rate it is not wrong in pointing out the impossibility of pain existing in a world ruled by a God who is both omnipotent and all-benevolent. As God is loving, say the Christian Scientists (if I understand them aright), he cannot will us to suffer pain; and as he is all-powerful he is able to prevent pain from coming into existence. Therefore it follows that pain does *not* exist, and as soon as we recognise this all our fancied pain will vanish. Apart from the logical incoherence of the Christian Science philosophy, it is plain that this theory of evil still leaves us with the old difficulty: if pain and evil do not exist, they at all events seem to exist, and a delusion is in itself an evil.

Perhaps a safer Christian argument is that the pain and evil of the world are "good in the making"—or rather that they constitute a kind of refiner's fire in which the corruption of mankind is gradually purged away so that the human soul may enter free from blemish into the presence of the Lamb. But it is an insult to an omnipotent God to suppose that he is obliged to use evil or painful means to arrive at an ultimate good. If the doctrine of Christian theism were that God, though a very powerful being and anxious to do the best he can for his humble creatures, is not omnipotent, and is himself obliged to struggle against a self-existing evil, then the position might be more or less intelligible: but the orthodox theory assumes God's omnipotence. The Christian will perhaps assert that evil or apparent evil is a necessary part of the "divine plan"—but this is no solution of the difficulty. How can it be part of the divine plan of an omnipotent and all-loving Creator who was absolutely unlimited in his choice of plans? What may be "necessary" to a being of limited powers cannot be

"necessary" to a deity whose powers are of infinite extent.

There seems to be only one way out of the difficulty: it is by adopting one of the alternatives stated by St. Augustine and rejected by Dr. Inge—that God, though absolutely good, is not absolutely omnipotent. For all we know to the contrary, the abolition of evil in the world might involve a logical contradiction, and it may be that God's power does not extend to the reconciliation of contradictories. This is the theory eloquently urged by Mr. Hugh MacColl.[1] The argument is by no means to be despised, and possibly it may contain an adumbration of the truth, though the assumption that the elimination of evil from the world would involve a logical impossibility is made solely to extricate God from responsibility for the existence of evil and to enable us to retain the other assumption that he is omnibenevolent. The two assumptions may be true or they may be false; but if we adopt them it is as well to remember that we surrender the theory of the absolute omnipotence of God. As McTaggart shows, if we deny to God the power to reconcile contradictions, we deny him omnipotence.[2] Yet on the whole it

[1] The death of this able writer occurred in December, 1909. The reference is to his *Man's Origin, Destiny, and Duty* (Williams and Norgate, 1909). See, *e.g.*, pp. 38 *seq.*, 170 *seq.*

[2] Referring to the argument "that a universe without evil would involve in some way the violation of such laws as the law of Contradiction or of Excluded Middle, and that these laws are so fundamental that the existence of evil in the universe is inevitable," Dr. McTaggart goes on to show that "even if there were any ground for believing that the absence of evil from the universe would violate such laws as these, it is clear that a God who is bound by any laws is not omnipotent, since he cannot alter them," etc. (*Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 217). Dr. Rashdall criticises Dr. McTaggart's argument on the ground that "to call God's inability to violate the law of contradiction a limitation upon omnipotence seems to be using words in a somewhat non-natural sense" (*Mind*, October, 1906, pp. 537-8). Yet Dr. McTaggart's "tolerably

seems that some such theory as Mr. MacColl's is less objectionable than many others that have been suggested; though its nature is unfortunately such that it can never (at least in our present plane of existence) be more than a provisional theory expressly invented for the purpose of exonerating God, in man's eyes, from an awkward responsibility. Men prefer to see their God bereft of his omnipotence to seeing him deprived of his goodness.

The average orthodox Christian accounts for the existence of evil by the dismal theory of the existence of a personal Devil. This belief, it is needless to say, is fast decaying amongst educated persons, though it still flourishes among a large number of modern missionaries and evangelical Protestants,[1] and, of course, among orthodox Roman Catholics, yet it cannot be said that the theory goes very far in the direction of providing us with a solution of the problem. The

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obvious fact" still remains, that "if there is anything which God could not do if he wished, he is not omnipotent" (*loc. cit.*).

[1] The following is the theory of the Devil promulgated at Geneva by M. Thomas in his *Fictions ou Réalités*, published as recently as 1903: "En nous appuyant sur la Parole de Dieu, nous devons dire que Satan est une créature peut-être immortelle, en tout cas pas éternelle comme Dieu; il n'a pas toujours existé, il a dû commencer avec le temps, ce qui implique qu'il pourra aussi finir avec lui. Quant à sa puissance, si elle est grande, elle n'est nullement infinie; le jour où Dieu voudra la détruire, Il le pourra de suite. Dieu lui a donné un grand pouvoir, un pouvoir qui parfois nous étonne et nous fait trembler, Il ne lui a pas donné le pouvoir absolu. Un jour viendra où Il lui dira, comme aux flots de la mer: 'Tu iras jusqu'ici et tu n'iras pas plus loin!' et immédiatement Satan lui-même se verra obligé de s' incliner devant l'autorité souveraine du Tout-Puissant." (p. 277.) To Satan—"ange déchu"—is due "la désobéissance d'Adam et d' Eve et c' est de lui qu'aujourd'hui encore proviendraient ces initiations au mal que nous ne connaissons que trop par expérience." As to the reason for the fall of Satan (*une chute mystérieuse*) M. Thomas frankly supports the Miltonic hypothesis, and supposes that Satan while in heaven was seized by a "vertige des hauteurs," and thus fell through pride.

Christian says, in effect, that God is omnipotent; that the Devil's power, though of course vastly superior to that of man, is finite in extent, and is therefore infinitely inferior to that of God; that man and the Devil are at war with each other; and that God through his omnipotent power will infallibly give the victory to men who faithfully serve him and pray to him. This view of the situation is not easily reconciled, however, with the almost despairing statements sometimes made by Christian missionaries. Take, for example, the following typical utterance[1]:

> The world, the flesh, and the devil are in Asia as well as in America, and fighting harder. It is no holiday task to which we have set ourselves. We are engaged in a gigantic struggle in which there are against us "the principalities, the powers, the world rulers of this darkness." Need have we of patience, of determination, of "the strength of his might, and the whole armour of God." If this stupendous task is to be performed, the Church at home must adopt new methods. . . . It is time for Christendom to understand that its great work in the twentieth century is to plan this movement on a scale gigantic in comparison with anything it has yet done, and to grapple intelligently, generously, and resolutely with the stupendous task of christianising the world.[2]

One might really suppose from these rousing words that the Christian theory was similar to the Zoroastrian, and that God and the Devil are fighting a battle against

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Dec., 1909, p. 696.

[2] One is tempted to ask, Why not begin by christianising Christendom, or at least by christianising that large, influential, and ever-increasing army of Western thinkers who have rejected Christianity altogether and who believe that the true religion, when it comes, "will differ from Christianity by the whole breadth of heaven"? (See Sturt's *Ideal of a Free Church*, p. 83.)

each other on more or less equal terms. Do such writers realise what they mean when they declare that God's power is infinite and that of the Devil finite? "If we believe some of the gravest and most explicit warnings of the Holy Scriptures," says a missionary bishop, "there is an unseen force working for evil, guided with a will and skill short indeed—infinitely short, thank God—of infinite, but to us as vast as it is subtle." [1] But if, as Christianity holds, the infinitely-powerful God is on the side of man (or at least baptised man) in his war against a Satan whose powers are finite, why use hyperbolical expressions about the terrors of the struggle? Perhaps it is merely with the practical object of stimulating the energies of slothful man, who might be tempted to relinquish his share in the struggle if he realised that God's omnipotence was quite sufficient to bring about the desired result without any puny assistance from himself. But why not be candid and say so? why lead the thoughtless to suppose that the struggle is really between evenly-matched powers of good and evil? Very possibly it is, but such is not the orthodox Christian theory. The duel between the Devil and his divine adversary may in certain respects not unfitly be compared with a sea-fight between a heavily-armed Dreadnought battle-ship manned by a thousand fighters and a Canadian canoe manned by an infant six months old armed with a rattle. "We are so glad," writes a missionary, "to know that you are praying for us. For some little time past we have been suffering a desperate onslaught of the powers of darkness, and the faith of our helpers, who are young and inexperienced, is being severely

[1] Quoted in *China's Millions*, May, 1909, p. 66. The words are those of Bishop Handley Moule.

tried."[1] Surely it is obvious that these most worthy people, if they are true believers in the doctrines which they spend their lives in teaching, have either unnecessarily magnified the powers of evil or have strangely failed to understand what is meant when God's power is described as infinite and as being exercised on man's behalf. Let us suppose that two hostile armies are advancing to meet one another—one consisting of a million men, well trained and capably led, and the other consisting of a corporal and two privates—God. Provided that God (that is to say, the personal omnipotent deity postulated by the Christians) puts forth his strength on behalf of the weaker side, which we will assume to be the side of right and justice, then it is unnecessary to ask to which of the two armies victory will be given. It will not be a fair fight at all: the chances of the million men are as one to infinity. Perhaps the Christian will reply that God works through normal laws, and that as it would involve a suspension of those laws if he were to allow a million men, however wicked, to be overthrown by three men, however virtuous, he could not be expected to interfere in this matter. But why should this be regarded as a more serious breach of natural law than that involved in the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the burning fiery furnace,[2] or in the preservation of Daniel from the lions[3]—both of which incidents are among the Old Testament marvels which have been repeatedly declared by Christian missionaries in China to be strictly and historically true? Moreover, Christians to-day who believe in the objective efficacy of petitionary prayer hold strenuously to the view that God still

[1] *China's Millions*, March, 1910, p. 45.
[2] Daniel iii., 13-27.
[3] Daniel vi., 16-24.

constantly interferes with the ordinary course of nature in order to grant the wishes of the faithful, and thereby carry out the promises[1] given by himself during the period of his incarnation on earth. Definitions of miracles are various and often contradictory, but I presume that any event may be regarded as a miracle if it be such that it would not have happened in the ordinary course of nature and without supernatural intervention. But to say that there are degrees of impossibility in the performance of miracles is meaningless, especially when the miracle-worker is no other than omnipotent God.

The present position and ultimate fate of the Devil in the great Scheme presents some highly interesting problems. It is difficult, if not impossible, on the Christian theory, to imagine the Prince of Darkness ever being allowed to evolve himself into a condition of blessedness—yet on the Christian's own showing does he not deserve some gratitude and sympathy?[2] The French soldier in Charles Reade's novel used to greet his friends with the cheering news of the Devil's decease ("Courage, camarades, le diable est mort"), but according to the Christian theory, Satan is not to be allowed either to die or to mend his ways. According to some of the hymns sung in the churches by "young men and maidens, old men and children," one of the most satisfactory features of the Last Day's proceedings is to be the spectacle of a chained Satan. For example:

[1] See p. 202.

[2] Christianity holds that devils cannot be converted, and therefore cannot resume their forfeited places among the blessed, but Mohammedanism asserts that their position is not altogether hopeless. Mohammed himself is understood to have converted a considerable number of these unfortunate creatures.

"Then the end: Thy Church completed,
All Thy chosen gathered in,
With their King in glory seated,
Satan bound, and banished sin."[1]

Thus in the great day of general jubilation Satan alone is to be caged. Yet surely he deserves a better fate at the hands of those who owe their prosperity more to him than to any other agency. If, as the orthodox Christian now usually asserts, sin and evil or temptations to sin and evil were necessary to our spiritual growth, then without Satan—the arch-tempter—no spiritual growth could have taken place, God's purposes would not have been fulfilled, and no one would have qualified himself for the joys of heaven.[2] Surely Satan has at least as good a claim as any one else to be hailed as the redeemer of mankind. He may have caused the first man to fall into sin (though at present the doctrine of the fall of man is taught more falteringly than of old), but surely he has most splendidly atoned for that unfortunate episode in the Garden of Eden six thousand years ago by providing men with the means of making the spiritual and moral progress that fit them for eternal bliss. He may have caused the fall of man, but he has also been mainly or largely instrumental in man's recovery, whereas his own unfortunate fall has been attended by no such happy results. Satan, apparently, is the sole creature the conditions of whose existence refute the universal validity of the law of evolution. I once submitted these speculations to a

[1] *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 362.

[2] "*Moral* evil, the evil called *wickedness*, is a necessary indispensable factor in the upward development of the sentient universe. On no other hypothesis can we reconcile the three attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence, which we ascribe to the Supreme Being."—Hugh MacColl's *Man's Origin, Destiny, and Duty*, p. 41.

missionary to whom, by the way, the existence of a personal devil was a matter that admitted of no dispute. He pointed out that Satan deserved no credit for his share in the moral advancement of mankind because such advancement came about by the will of God and not by the will of Satan himself, who was concerned only in making things as unpleasant as possible for every one. In that case, I replied, though Satan may hardly deserve our gratitude he at least merits our admiration. The Christian will admit, presumably, that Satan is aware of the fact that he is fighting Omnipotence. If he has not made himself acquainted with this fact then he is quite unaccountably and inexcusably ignorant of a vitally important subject that is, by the Christian hypothesis, open to the knowledge of his own plaything—mankind. I am aware of no dogma of the Church that obliges the Christian to believe that between God and man there are secrets regarding Satan's future career with which Satan himself is unfamiliar. There is no reason to suppose he is excluded from churches: in fact some pious persons have been overheard to say that he enters such buildings often and freely.[1] Such being the case, it is impossible that he can have been kept in ignorance of facts relating to himself which are among the subjects most frequently discoursed of within those sacred buildings. The hymn from which a stanza has just been quoted would of itself be sufficient to make him gravely suspect that

[1] This is how a missionary in China—a believer in Mr. Spurgeon's theology—describes an unhappy accident that befell a brother-missionary who had fallen into the clutches of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. "In that church, just a week before I visited the place, there had been a big fight. One of the deacons was pitched down the embankment. But that missionary brother did not see that the Devil was inside the church eating up the sheep. Poor fellow, he was a believer in the 'New Theology'" (*China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 107).

however brave a fight he might put up, and however long the mock-struggle might last, his chances of victory were infinitely smaller than would be those of an aggressive oyster at war with an elephant. Now if, with no prospects before him but those of eternal defeat and damnation, Satan is continuing the war against heaven of his own free will, he is either fired by a despair which is more magnificent than any hope, or his heroism is of a supreme grandeur unimaginable by the mind of man and inexpressible in human words.

There is another Satanic problem with which our Chinese minds have been puzzled and of which no missionary has yet offered us a satisfactory solution. Christianity shrinks from admitting that God deliberately created Satan as an instrument of evil. The popular theory is that Satan was once a sinless angel in heaven and fell from his high estate through the sin of pride.[1] One feels impelled to ask, firstly, why God created a being who, as his omniscience must have told him, would bring discredit upon heaven and misery upon mankind, and secondly, why having driven him out of heaven God did not keep the dreadful creature closely confined to the place prepared for him. Waiving these points, we are still confronted by the most serious of all objections to the ingenious hypothesis popularised by Milton and preached to-day in China by many missionaries. The theory of Satan's moral corruption and fall obviously necessitates our tracing the origin of evil to a pre-diabolic source. Who or what was the cause of the sinful pride that led to Satan's ruin? It must have been a far more powerful agency than Satan himself, for it was able to contaminate the purity and sinlessness of God's own heaven, whereas Satan's sphere of activity is understood to be restricted to the air, the

[1] See note, p. 136.

earth (especially China), and his own fiery domicile. Dare we suggest that somewhere, lurking in the background, there must be a super-devil, and that Satan's final defeat will not therefore be a guarantee for the non-reappearance of evil?

All this will, of course, appear to be foolish trifling in the estimation of those who have long ago given up a belief in a personal devil yet still regard themselves as entitled to the name of orthodox Christians. But I must beseech them to remember that I am writing from the point of view of the Chinese "inquirer," and that the questions and speculations which I venture to put forward in the course of this Appeal are in every case suggested by the Christian doctrines that are daily poured into Chinese ears by thousands of Christian missionaries. The Christianity that is taught to pagans is not, be it observed, the Christianity that is expounded in the pulpit of St. Mary's Church at Oxford, nor is it the Christianity of the City Temple in London.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIAN DEMONOLOGY

A CONSIDERABLE number of evangelical missionaries in China hail from Scandinavia; and as most if not all of this contingent are sincere believers in Satan's personality and would be shocked to learn that no such creature existed, it will be interesting to observe what effect (if any) on their minds and teachings will be produced by certain recent events in Sweden. It appears that a Stockholm newspaper instituted in 1909 what it called "An Inquiry into the Existence of the Devil" (*Djâfvuls-enquête*), and invited expressions of opinion from any one whose views on this enticing subject were deserving of public attention.[1] The articles published by the journal in question aroused so much interest that a meeting was held at which a motion was carried calling upon the Government "to aid in abolishing superstition by making it possible for a Lutheran clergyman to deny the dogma of the Devil's existence, of hell, and of eternal damnation, without running the risk of being ejected from his office; and further asking that an authoritative Church meeting should be called to decide what is the prevailing teaching of Christendom on these points." Among the minority that voted against the motion

[1] My information on the subject of this Swedish incident is entirely derived from an article by Ivor Tuckett in *The Literary Guide* (March, 1909), pp. 41 *seq.*

were seven clergymen, but an eighth clergyman not only voted with the majority, but openly uttered the words, "Among my religious conceptions there is no place for any idea of a devil." This unorthodox utterance on the part of a clergyman resulted in his being formally charged with heresy before the Stockholm Konsistorium. It was pointed out on behalf of the prosecution that "belief in the Devil's existence is one of the most fixed articles of Lutheran doctrine." How indeed could it be otherwise, seeing that Luther himself was visited and addressed by the Devil several times, and that Luther on one memorable occasion is said to have thrown an ink-bottle at him? However, the remarkable result of the trial was that although six of the twelve members of the Konsistorium "had already expressed themselves in the Press definitely in favour of the dogma of the Devil's existence, they agreed to a judgment acquitting Pastor Hannerz of unorthodoxy by ten votes to two." It must be explained, however, that the ten members by no means supported the accused pastor in his denial of the Devil's existence: it appears that four or five at least acquitted him merely on technical grounds. As for the two who dissented from the acquittal, they stated that they did so "because they considered the doctrine about the Devil, found in the Holy Scriptures, to be bound up organically and indissolubly with Christian teaching, and to be expressed in the clearest way, not least by Jesus Christ himself."

Certainly if the Konsistorium had wished to find outside support for the theory of the continued existence and vitality of Satan, they could hardly have done better than consult some of the missionary journals. We learn from them that the Evil One is frequently an uninvited guest at prayer-meetings. It is related

by some missionaries that on one occasion they "seemed to realise as never before the power of the enemy. The Devil took hold of one man and tried to work him up to a frenzy, but Mr. Goforth checked this."[1] The spectacle of the contest between the Devil and Mr. Goforth must have been an inspiring one.

In this little story we hear of "the Devil" only. But missionaries in China—those at least of the class with whose teachings and methods these pages are concerned—are far from content with postulating the existence of Satan. They are also convinced that the world—especially the heathen world—swarms with minor devils, the chief object of whose existence is the capture and destruction of human souls.[2] That they should believe in devils is not to be wondered at in view of their absolute reliance on the inerrancy of the Bible and the omniscient Godhead of Jesus: and indeed one cannot help thinking that in holding such beliefs as that of devil-possession they deserve credit for more honesty and consistency than are shown by their more "advanced" colleagues in religion, who by violent distortions of language and far-fetched "reconciliations" try to make it appear that an adherence to Christian theology and an acquiescence in the dogma of the divine inspiration of the Bible are not incompatible with a full and frank acceptance of the

[1] *China's Millions*, March, 1909, p. 39.

[2] The Rev. Justus Doolittle mentions without a smile and perhaps with half-belief the illuminating theory that the Chinese language was specially invented by the Devil so that by the creation of linguistic difficulties he might "prevent the prevalence of Christianity in a country where he has so many zealous and able subjects" (*Social Life of the Chinese*, p. 604). It is clear that the Devil deserves to be elected to the honorary membership of every Society that takes an interest in philology. The invention of Esperanto was a trifle compared with the Devil's task in constructing the language of China.

results of modern scientific discovery and critical research.

I have heard educated Europeans, when they have been informed of the fact that numerous missionaries in China honestly believe in the reality of demon-possession, express amazement and incredulity. That they should feel surprise at such an announcement is only one of very many indications of the profound change undergone by a multitude of Christian beliefs in the course of a single generation. Only a few years ago an orthodox Christian would no sooner have expressed doubts as to the truth of the devil-stories in the Gospels than he would have questioned the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth or the value of the historical evidence for the Resurrection.[1] Quite recently a belief in demon-possession held sway in the minds even of highly cultured European Christians. Of this fact no one can be oblivious who has read Huxley's delightfully piquant contributions to the famous controversy on the subject of the Gadarene swine—the controversy in which Gladstone fought with pathetic doggedness on the side of the pigs, or rather on the side of their be-devilment. Even now it is too soon to take it for granted that belief in devil-possession is restricted to evangelical pastors, popes, and maiden aunts.

Two years ago a remarkable collection of essays by various authors was issued under the auspices of *The Hibbert Journal* with the title *Jesus or Christ?* The circumstances in which these essays were written must be well known to a large number of my readers. The

[1] See Huxley's *Science and Christian Tradition* (Eversley ed.), pp. 322–3. The passage concludes with these words: "Finally, in these last years of the nineteenth century, the demonological hypothesis of the first century are, explicitly or implicitly, held and occasionally acted upon by the immense majority of Christians of all confessions."

Rev. R. Roberts, who was or had been a Congregational minister, wrote the first article, in which with great freedom and candour he dealt with the problem as to whether the Christ worshipped by Christians as incarnate God was really a spiritual "ideal" (which would not necessarily cease to retain its full value as an ideal even if it were proved to have no basis in historic fact), or whether the attributes of the Christian Christ may in very truth be predicated of the Jewish artisan Jesus of Nazareth. In various forms this question has been asked again and again, and has received many different answers. Educated men have long known, and the masses are dimly beginning to understand, that the Christ of theology is not the Jesus of history.[1] If the symposium had no other result, it would be of high instructive value merely as a means of opening the eyes of multitudes of Christians to the extraordinary diversity of opinions *on fundamental questions* held today by representative members of the various Churches of Christendom, and of revealing the insubstantial basis of the plea—commonly urged in extenuation of the bitterness of sectarian antagonisms—that if opposed to one another in respect to organisation and ritual, the Christian Churches and sects are one and undivided in respect of the deepest Christian verities.[2]

But what we are here concerned with are merely the utterances of the various writers in *Jesus or Christ?* with regard to the subject of devil-possession. The

[1] *Cf.* Sturt's *Idea of a Free Church*, pp. 237–8.

[2] A very interesting and valuable criticism of the *Jesus or Christ?* essays appears above the name of M. Loisy in *The Hibbert Journal* of April, 1910. "After reading," he says, "all the dissertations which the question proposed by the Rev. R. Roberts has provoked, one is strongly tempted to think that contemporary theology—except for Roman Catholics, with whom traditional orthodoxy has always the force of law—is a veritable Tower of Babel, in which the confusion of ideas is even greater than the diversity of tongues" (p. 496).

following are among the remarks made by Mr. Roberts (very justly, as many of us will allow) on the subject of the alleged exorcisms carried out by Jesus of Nazareth. Referring to the incident narrated in Mark i., 23–26, he says:

Here is acquiescence in the animistic theory of disease, and an exercise of exorcism in which the people apparently thoroughly believed. Now I ask, Did Jesus "know as God" and "speak as man" in this instance? If he was God, he must have known the people's opinion was an error, and an error too the theory that he had cast an evil spirit out of this man. What are we to think of God, who permits such things and becomes a party to this exorcism? If he did not know that this was an error, then his knowledge was at fault, and what are we to think of a God with limited knowledge? Dr. Fairbairn and his followers admit these limitations of knowledge, while yet claiming that this admittedly limited Personality was at the same time "Very God of Very God." These, however, are not merely intellectual limitations. There are also ethical limitations involved, and they touch on the theory of sinlessness. In the case before us Jesus permitted the people to believe that which was not true. If he was God, he knew that their belief in obsession was an error; he must have known that after ages would quote his example as sanction for superstition and cruelty.[1] We are therefore driven to the conclusion that "One who had all the knowledge of God declined to turn any part of it into science for man" in this instance, and thus allowed humanity to drift for more than a thousand years through the night of ignorance and cruelty. In a mere man this ethical limitation would be a sin. Is it otherwise in One who is said to be God?[2]

[1] Mr. Roberts is of course referring to persecutions for witchcraft, etc.

[2] *Jesus or Christ?* (Williams & Norgate, 1909), pp. 279–80. See also Mr. Roberts's later article in *The Hibbert Journal* of October, 1909, p. 87; in the R.P.A. *Annual* for 1911, pp. 3–10, and in *The Quest* for October, 1910, pp. 108–25.

It is rather significant that the majority of Mr. Roberts's critics in *Jesus or Christ?* either forbear to enter into a discussion of the Gospel-stories about devils, or admit that in this matter Jesus shared the superstitions of his age. The Rev. James Drummond, for example, allows that Jesus "accepted the general belief of his time about demons," and was "beyond reasonable question" mistaken in so doing.[1] But now let us turn to the views of a well-known member of the Society of Jesus, the Rev. Father Rickaby, who is also a contributor to this interesting collection of essays.

No blame [he says] attaches to the Rev. R. Roberts for not knowing what, I presume, has never come in his way—the spirit and belief of Catholics and the theology of the Catholic Church. Yet, however inculpable this ignorance, his argument suffers by it. He assumes, for instance, as a thing quite certain, that there never was such a thing as diabolical possession. There are Catholic priests who could assure him that they have met with it in their own experience by unmistakable signs. The Church still ordains exorcists; and occasionally, with caution by permission of the bishop of the diocese, the possessed are solemnly exorcised.[2]

That good Catholics do believe and must believe in

[1] *Jesus or Christ?* p. 200.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 137. In Dr. Farnell's *Evolution of Religion*, p. 230, occurs the following passage: "What maintained the use of the spell-prayer in full vigour throughout the earlier and mediæval epochs of Christendom, even in the orthodox ritual, was chiefly the practice of exorcism and the belief in demons and demoniac possession. . . . As modern society has abandoned such institutions, and the modern mind is no longer possessed with demonology, so in the modern worship prayer has become more and more purified from the associations of the spell." Evidently Dr. Farnell was hasty in assuming that "the modern mind is no longer possessed with demonology," or that the practice of "exorcism" has been abandoned.

devil-possession goes without saying, inasmuch as its truth is guaranteed by a Book which is absolutely free from error and "has God for its author."[1] But would it not be a wise and politic act on the part of the Church (in view of the widespread scepticism of the present day) if it were to notify the College of Physicians on all future occasions when a solemn exorcism is about to take place, and invite a few qualified medical men to attend the ceremony in the interests of science and true religion? It would be well, also, if such doctors could be given an opportunity of making their own diagnosis of the patient's complaint before the ceremony takes place, for signs that appeared "unmistakable" to a Catholic priest might be quite differently interpreted by a lay physician.

A devil is not a creature whose existence is independently known to science [says Frederick Myers]. The devils with terrifying names which possessed Sœur Angélique of Loudun would at the Salpêtrière under Charcot in our days have figured merely as stages of "clounisme" and "attitudes passionelles."[2]

The theory of devil-possession is not confined to Christianity. In ancient Babylonia "devils" were exorcised,[3] and, in the Polynesian islands possession

[1] Gregory the Great described the biblical writers as the Holy Ghost's *calami*, to show that God is sole and direct author of the entire canonical Scriptures.

[2] *Human Personality*, vol. ii., p. 199. See also vol. i., pp. 303 *seq.*

[3] See Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 272. "For Hebrew antiquity," says another author, "direct evidence is scanty, but there is no reason to suppose that the common people in Israel differed much from their neighbours. Spooks and goblins swarmed in their world. *Incubi* and *Succubæ* were perhaps as familiar to Hebrew antiquity as to mediæval Europe. Cripples and abortions were the result

is, or was till lately, regarded as a common cause of disease. As similar beliefs have existed for ages in China, the Catholic and Protestant missionaries meet with no difficulty in persuading their ignorant Chinese adherents of the truth of this part of Christian doctrine. A well-known missionary, Dr. Nevius, wrote a book in which he cheerfully admitted his entire belief in the genuineness of demon-possession in China, and cites a large number of cases. "Every page," wrote one of his critics,[1] "bears witness to the author's desire to be exact in description, unbiassed in interpretation, and just in criticism; it is rather his misfortune than his fault that he has fallen so far short of the mark in all three respects." Yet Dr. Nevius by no means stands alone. "We may well catch our breath," writes one of the foremost American psychologists, "when we find Protestant missionaries in Korea, China, India, and Africa giving their assent to the theory of demon-possession."[2] Catholic missionaries have shown quite as much zeal as their Protestant rivals in performing exorcisms in devil-ridden China. A delightfully naïve account of such proceedings is given in a letter written in 1862 by a French missionary-bishop.

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of demonic lust, as the *nephilim* sprang from the marriage of angels with the daughters of Adam. Disease was demoniac in origin and the healing art consisted in exorcism" (*The American Journal of Theology*, October 1909, p. 605).

[1] Prof. W. Romaine Newbold, quoted in Myers's *Human Personality*, vol. ii., pp. 500–1.

[2] Prof. G. A. Coe in *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, p. 340. He cites the following witnesses as to demon-possession: for Korea, D. K. Lambuth, "Korean Devils and Christian Missionaries," in the *Independent*, August, 1907, pp. 287 *seq.;* for China, Dr. Nevius, in his *Demon Possession* (Chicago, 1895); for India, H. S. Dyer, in *Revival in India* (London, 1907), esp. pp. 14 *seq.;* for Africa, R. H. Nassau, in his *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York, 1904), pp. 135–7.

Will you believe me? [he says]. Ten whole villages have been converted! The Devil is furious *et fait les cent coups*. There have been five or six cases of possession during the fortnight that I have been preaching. Our catechumens drive out the devils and heal the sick with holy water. I have seen some marvellous things! *The Devil has been of great assistance to me in converting the pagans*. Just as in our Lord's time, he cannot help himself speaking the truth, although he is the father of lies! Hear what happened in the case of a poor possessed fellow who uttered loud cries and went through a thousand contortions. "Why do you preach the true religion?" says the Devil. "I cannot endure to see you rob me of my disciples!" "What is your name?" asks the catechumen. For some time he refuses to reply, then says, "I have been sent by Lucifer." "How many of you are there?" "There are twenty-two of us." Holy water and the sign of the cross delivered this possessed one from his devils.[1]

Thus poor simple Satan was made a fool of as usual, and in spite of all his efforts to carry out his appropriate rôle as collector of souls for hell he found himself in the mortifying and ridiculous position of being made chief collaborator with a Catholic bishop in winning recruits for heaven!

The conversion of the ten villages referred to in this letter occurred half a century ago. It would be interesting to know what has happened to those converts and their children during the interval. Are they still Christians? If so, do they still believe in talking devils and in a personal Lucifer? If so, does Western Christendom, which is responsible for this folly, propose to allow them to continue in such beliefs? If not, are they to be told that the wonderful bishop and his

[1] This letter is quoted in the original French by Dr. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 141 (4th ed.).

still more remarkable catechumens were victims of delusion, or were ignorant of the real nature of the complaints which they diagnosed as devil-possession, and that the conversions to Christianity were therefore wholly or partially due to misapprehensions on both sides?

Satan and his devils, we find, were not to be "bluffed" out of China by a wily French bishop and his magic water and crucial talismans. That remarkable periodical *China's Millions*, to which I have had occasion to refer so often, contains numerous accounts of successful exorcisms by Protestant missionaries.[1] The following paragraph was published as recently as August, 1909:

DEMONS CAST OUT.

There was another experience at Autung Ku not met with at Tsingkiangpu nor at Nanking—four demon-possessed women and one man, who all sought the prayers of God's people for deliverance. Some had been partly set free from the devil's chains, but one poor woman was possessed when she came to the platform. Such a sight I had never before witnessed. We called upon all to pray for her, and then came one of those outbursts of simultaneous prayer that so often come at revival times. Over three hundred people rose to their feet at once and poured forth a volume of prayer that was simply grand to hear. All prayed in their own words aloud, yet no confusion; all commenced together and all ended together, yet there was no prompting from man, but the Holy Spirit was in full control. . . . The woman went from the platform delivered, and was again on the platform in the evening, in her right mind, confessing her sins.[2]

[1] For some interesting observations on this subject see Arthur Davenport's *China from Within*, pp. 120–26.

[2] *China's Millions*, Aug., 1909, p. 125.

The fact that both Protestants and Catholics seem to perform exorcisms with equal success though by different methods should help very materially, one would suppose, to induce the rival Christian bodies to show more charity and good-will towards one another's propaganda than they have hitherto found it convenient to cultivate: yet it does not seem to have had that desirable effect. If Satan and his angels work indiscriminately against both Catholics and Protestants, and may be expelled from human bodies with equal success by holy water or a Bible, a Jesuit priest or a Presbyterian minister, surely it should be obvious to both branches of the Christian Church that priest and minister must both be waging heaven's war against hell. If, as some Protestants believe, the Catholics are really fellow-workers with the powers of darkness, how do they account for the fact that the devils work against their own allies, and on numerous occasions have been shamed and put to rout by Catholic exorcists?

That certain Protestant missionaries in China do regard their Catholic brothers as limbs of the Evil One may be proved without difficulty. "It is noteworthy," says a missionary in Formosa, "that a good proportion of our people [that is, Protestant converts] who have been disciplined for evil conduct, ultimately find a haven in the Roman Catholic Church."[1] In other words, the good Protestants reject what is evil: the bad Catholics welcome it. In a recent issue of *China's Millions* I read of a Chinese who, though "formerly a good Christian," had "gone over to Rome"—the necessary deduction being that he had thereby ceased to be a Christian or had become a bad one.

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Sept., 1909, p. 497.

Some of the people [says the writer] had gone over to Rome because we would not take up their lawsuits, but the Spirit of God broke them terribly. If people in this land are going to Rome, it is because the Spirit of God is absent. . . . It is not the Spirit's leading at all. *It is the Devil's leading*. Wherever the Spirit of God came he swept out that nonsense and the people came right back.[1]

And yet I have heard Western travellers in China express surprise that Protestant and Catholic missionaries living in the same town do not exchange visits!

[1] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, p. 96. *Cf.* the views of Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pt. iii., sect. iv., mem. i.: "That the Devil is most busy amongst us that are of the true Church, appears by those several appositions, heresies, schisms, which in all ages he hath raised to subvert it, and in that of Rome especially, wherein Antichrist himself now sits and plays his prize."

CHAPTER XI

HELL AND THE DAMNATION OF THE HEATHEN

HAVE the bulk of the Christian missionaries in China yet abandoned the belief once firmly held and taught by the Church that the "heathen" are destined for the fires of hell? One would like to think that this is one of the horrible perversions of the Jewish prophet's teachings that have been quietly abandoned; but the evidence is hardly such as to justify this view. .

Dr. G. E. Morrison mentions a missionary who after three years' work had baptised six converts, and considered that his labours had been abundantly blessed. On the question of the destiny of the heathen he held views that were as definite as they were uncompromising.

> Those Chinese who have never heard the gospel will be judged by the Almighty as he thinks fit, but those Chinese who have heard the Christian doctrine and still steel their hearts against the Holy Ghost will assuredly go to hell; there is no help for them, they can believe and they won't; had they believed, their reward would be eternal; they refuse to believe, and their punishment will be eternal."

Dr. Morrison adds an appropriate comment: "It was a curious study to observe the equanimity with which this good-natured man contemplates the work

he has done in China, when to obtain six dubious conversions he has on his own confession sent some thousands of unoffending Chinese *en enfer bouillir éternellement.*"[1] The same writer cites the following observation from the pen of the Secretary of the China Inland Mission. "Do we believe that these millions are without hope in the next world? We turn the leaves of God's Word in vain, for there we find no hope; not only that, but positive words to the contrary. Yes! we believe it."[2]

In an able paper by Dr. Rashdall on "The Motive of Modern Missionary Work,"[3] there is an interesting passage bearing on this subject. He refers to the belief of "orthodox people of the last generation" that "the whole heathen world was doomed to everlasting torments unless they heard and accepted what is technically called 'the gospel,'" and remarks that "it would be a waste of time to argue against such a view at the present day." Perhaps Dr. Rashdall would not consider it a waste of time if he were to come to China and listen to the teachings of certain missionaries, or even if he were to glance at a few of their periodicals. He hints, indeed, at the possibility that the eternal-punishment view is not extinct in England itself.

There are [he says] probably large numbers of persons—conservative theologians and by no means illiterate clergymen as well as the wholly ignorant—who would refuse definitely to disclaim the possibility of everlasting punishment befalling relatively good men who die without having heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ; still more of them would admit that such a fate might be in store for

[1] *An Australian in China*, p. 66.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.
[3] *American Journal of Theology*, July, 1907, pp. 369 *seq.*

those who have heard, but not accepted, the "terms of salvation" contained, or supposed to be contained, in the New Testament—a possibility which has sometimes, with undeniable logic, been actually twisted around into an argument against missions to the heathen. It has been argued that by preaching the gospel to the heathen we are involving them in a doom which involuntary ignorance might otherwise exempt them.

If the premises are granted the logic of the argument is indeed unanswerable.

Nowadays there are many English and American churchmen who are keenly anxious to surrender that terrible bogey, the Athanasian Creed, one of their chief objections to it being its reiterated assertion that unbelievers in the incomprehensible dogmas of the Church shall "without doubt perish everlastingly." Yet only the other day there was held in England a meeting of indignant Anglican priests and laymen, who not only expressed themselves strongly opposed to the suggested deposition of the Creed from its place of honour, but emphatically asserted their uncompromising belief in its principles and their adherence to its tenets.[1] If cultivated Englishmen in the twentieth century can

[1] "At a general meeting of the English Church Union, held last night at the Church House, the subject for consideration was 'The Athanasian Creed and the Convocation of Canterbury.' Lord Halifax presided, and there was a large attendance. The Chairman, on opening the meeting, announced that a very large number of letters had been received from persons of all sorts and conditions throughout all parts of the country, affirming their determination and steadfast resolution to resist any alteration in the position and *status* of the Athanasian Creed in the Book of Common Prayer. (Cheers.) . . . It had been made abundantly clear that the use of the Creed was being attacked because it was the truth of the statements made by the Creed that was denied. They were told without hesitation that the Creed was attacked because its statements were not true. Then they knew where they were, and they had but one answer—the Creed was true, and they would defend it to the

honestly and without any mental reservation accept the teachings of that most extraordinary of ecclesiastical documents, it need not surprise us to find that there are missionaries in China who adhere to the stupefying doctrine that an omnipotent and benevolent God intends to inflict upon millions of innocent men, women, and children a degree of torture which in no conceivable circumstances would have been sanctioned by any of the most infamous and bloodthirsty human monsters that have ever wielded a tyrant's sceptre; and that this terrific punishment is to be inflicted by the all-loving Father because his miserable victims failed to guess the right answer to the inscrutable riddle of the universe. We execrate the wickedness of the king in the fairy tale who promised his daughter's hand to the man who guessed the royal conundrums successfully, and cut off the heads of all the suitors who guessed wrongly; but we are to love

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death. . . . Any alteration of the present Prayer Book by subterfuges by which the recitation of the Creed was to be withdrawn from public use they repudiated and rejected. They would have none of it, and they would in the future, as in the past, struggle against and resist all proposals for tampering with the present use and position of the Athanasian Creed in the Book of Common Prayer. (Cheers.)"—[*The Times*, Nov. 18, 1909.] See also Canon Newbolt's book of sermons entitled *The Book of Common Prayer* (Mowbray, 1909). The Canon (who also strenuously opposes the withdrawal of the Creed) admits that it is "difficult to understand," yet assures us that it "is regarded as a magnificent exposition of doctrine, even by those who wish to silence it." It may be magnificent as an exposition of doctrine, but—if Lord Halifax and his friends will allow us to ask the question—does the doctrine happen to be true? See a sensible article on the subject by Prof. W. Emery Barnes in *The Contemporary Review*, July, 1909, pp. 58–61. He reminds his readers of various ritual-defects that constitute festering wounds, "through which the strength of our Church ebbs daily away"; and says that of all the causes of danger perhaps none is greater than the compulsory recitation of the damnatory or minatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed.

fervently and worship obsequiously a God who acts with infinitely more atrocious wickedness on an infinitely larger scale.

In a missionary journal published as recently as December, 1909, there is an article describing the need for evangelistic work among Chinese women. "We feel the first step toward successful efforts in this line," says the writer, "is to feel deeply the importance of it and *the utter hopelessness of their lost condition* apart from salvation in Jesus Christ."[1] A writer in another recent issue of the same journal dwells on "the necessity laid upon us to be instant in season and out of season that the millions still in heathen darkness in this land may have the gospel given to them *ere they pass out into eternal darkness and doom.*"[2] In another journal a man named Wu is mentioned "who (D.V.) will shortly be baptised—another 'brand plucked out of the fire.'"[3] Quotations of this kind could be multiplied to any desired extent, for missionary journals of the kind here dealt with contain but few gleams of a larger hope. Arthur Judson Brown, indeed, in his recent work, *The Why and How of Foreign Missions*, is gracious enough to say, "*It is possible that some* who have never heard of Christ may be saved."[4] But, alas! this leaves the terrible counter-possibility unthroned.

Barbarism in religion dies hard, for though it is nearly three hundred years since mercifully-minded people in England tried to modify or abolish the brutal theory of the necessary damnation of the non-Christian races, they have only partially succeeded in their

[1] *Woman's Work in the Far East*, Dec., 1909, p. 168.
[2] *Ibid.*, Sept., 1909, p. 113.
[3] *China's Millions*, Oct., 1909, p. 155.
[4] The italics in these quotations are not in the originals.

object, after all this time. Archbishop Laud preached that the heathen might be saved from hell, and this heterodox teaching of his actually made the subject of one of the charges brought against him by the Puritans. It is of peculiar interest to observe that a similar charge has been made in this twentieth century against a missionary who was suspected by some of his more orthodox colleagues of having expressed unsound views on the subject of eternal damnation, in a book that bore the suspiciously latitudinarian title of *The Wideness of God's Mercy*. His accusers felt it their duty to "protest against the falling away from the orthodox belief in eternal punishment as held by a number of devoted missionaries."[1] However, the alarm in the orthodox camp was apparently a false one. The accused missionary hastened to explain that he was still a staunch supporter of the cheerful hypothesis of an eternal hell. To prove his orthodoxy he issued a manifesto from which the following is a quotation:

In view of statements which are being circulated with respect to my teaching as to the Future State, and which are based on considerable misunderstanding of my position, I wish to say: (1) I accept as final our Lord's words in Matthew xxv., 46, so far as those are concerned who have deliberately rejected Christ[2] . . . (5) I do not preach the "Larger Hope." There appears to me insurmountable difficulties in maintaining that every one will be saved.[3]

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, Sept., 1909, p. 485.

[2] "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."—Matt. xxv., 40, 41, 46.

[3] *Ibid.*, July, 1909, p. 364.

Thus we see that so far as this missionary is concerned the Christianity propagated in China will continue to be the Christianity that damns the unbeliever.[1]

It is pleasant to learn that the scriptural denunciations of the heathen are apparently capable of a more amiable interpretation than that given us by Christian missionaries. In an analysis by the Rev. D. Purves, D.D., of the various notions regarding the state of the dead that have existed among Jews and Christians at various epochs, he sums up thus:

> In fact it comes to this, that both in the Old and New Testaments the verdict is an agnostic one as regards the unbelieving; while the weight of the case as regards the righteous is made to rest on the present fact of a fellowship with God, which will be extended beyond death into eternity.[2]

The missionary body should rejoice with exceeding gladness to learn that there is still the ghost of a chance of salvation for the unbelieving heathen, and that the "positive words" referred to by the secretary of the China Inland Mission[3] have been interpreted by competent scholars in a sense surprisingly different from

[1] As one of the unbelievers, and therefore as one of the damned, perhaps I may be excused for suggesting that if a shred of justice remains in heaven the decree of damnation must surely include those Christians who, however pious they may be in their Christian environment, *would have clung to their heathen faith if they had been born in a heathen land.* If this be not so, it is clear that God punishes people with everlasting torture and rewards others with everlasting bliss, not through any merit or demerit of their own, but on account of the environment in which he himself has chosen to place them. No living Christian, of course, can say what religion he would have followed if he had been born elsewhere than in a Christian land; but God's knowledge *ex hypothesi* is not subject to human limitations.

[2] *The Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1907, p. 95.

[3] See p. 159.

that read into them by him. Undoubtedly the missionaries should rejoice: but *will* they do so? A very common and very remarkable characteristic of people who believe that the all-loving heavenly Father will inflict eternal punishment on sinners is that the doctrine seems to fill their pious minds with a peculiar kind of grim satisfaction and in no way lowers their estimation of the goodness of God; while if they hear doubts expressed as to the truth of the doctrine they are shocked and dismayed as if they had received unwelcome news. A Presbyterian Scot was once recommended to visit a certain church for the purpose of hearing a noted preacher. "Does he preach the doctrine of eternal damnation?" was the good man's question. On receiving an answer in the negative, he replied: "Ah, but I hold with that doctrine. I shall not go near his church."

I suppose that one most weighty reason why missionaries are reluctant to surrender the gloomy theory that the heathen are eternally lost is that by such a surrender they deprive themselves of one of the strongest arguments, if not the very strongest, in favour of the great missionary enterprise. "If the heathen can get along without us, both in this world and in the next, why take the trouble to convert them?" This is a very reasonable question, and probably the cause why one does not often hear it put in this direct form is that there is a growing tendency to relegate to the background the credal and dogmatic constituents of the Christian faith. In China the medical man and the strictly educational missions are doing work to which no sane man nowadays dreams of raising a serious objection; on the contrary, they evoke little but gratitude from all Chinese whose opinion is worth quoting or consulting. We Chinese are supposed to

be a callous and undemonstrative race; yet if the life of a sick Chinese child is saved by the ministrations of a missionary doctor, it is not unlikely that the child's father will feel lifelong gratitude towards his foreign benefactor. But if the doctor in his capacity of evangelist improves the occasion by trying to convince the Chinese father that the safety of his own soul and that of his much-loved son depend on their acceptance of the belief that a Jewish carpenter called Jesus forfeited his life two thousand years ago for the purpose of redeeming sinful mankind from the wrath of an angry Deity, it is more than possible that the Chinese parent, however sincerely he would like to please his benefactor, will find it quite impossible to work up an enthusiastic response. The fact that the missionary in his capacity as doctor saved his child's life will make him treat all Europeans with consideration from that day forward; the fact that the missionary in his capacity as evangelist wants him to believe that his soul is in jeopardy unless he "accepts Christ" leaves him strangely cold.

When missionaries try to inspire their Chinese audiences with dread of the hell-fires of evangelical Christianity they should remember that we Chinese have all heard of hell from our own Buddhist priests, and that if most of us refused long ago to believe in the bludgeons and pincers and saws and racks of the Buddhist hell we know of no good reason why we should believe in the flames of the hell described by Christians. You will tell us, perhaps, that the fires of your hell are spiritual fires, not like the ordinary fires that burn in your grates; but the Buddhist priests tell us much the same about their racks and pincers. Moreover, if it be true that Christians are beginning to spiritualise their hell it must be admitted that the refining process

is far from complete.[1] Some of my readers must be acquainted with that vivid description of hell—it might be said with accuracy to be a glowing description—which was perpetrated by one who has been happily designated "an ecclesiastic of most appropriate name—the Rev. J. Furniss." The description is too long to quote,[2] but the following are the words in which the Rev. Mr. Furniss describes the torments endured by a boy who has been sent to hell as a punishment for the terrific crimes of attending "dancing-houses, public-houses, and theatres."

The boy's eyes [he says] are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth, and breath of blazing fire rolls out of it. But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No. Then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones.

The boy, perhaps it will be said, was old enough to

[1] "The Roman Catholic Church still teaches not only that the purgatorial fire is material, but that it is situated in the middle of the earth; but it is certain that educated Romanists do not believe this. We cannot cast stones at them, for in our Church the teaching about the Ascension is equally chaotic. The story of a literal flight through the air is still treasured by many people, though we have all, I suppose, abandoned the idea of a geographical heaven, which alone gave to it a coherent meaning" (Dr. W. R. Inge's *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 150). It may be mentioned incidentally that the alleged fact of the Ascension of Christ through the air and clouds is still taught to gaping Chinese villagers by many missionaries in China. Is it the wish of Christendom that this teaching should continue?

[2] It will be found in John Wilson's *New Light on Old Problems* (R. P. A Reprint, pp. 64–5). See also Sir Leslie Stephen's *Agnostic's Apology* (R. P. A. Reprint, pp. 40 *seq.*).

know good from evil, and if he insisted upon going to theatres and otherwise playing into the hands of Satan he has only himself to blame, though his brain boil and bubble to all eternity. But what are we to say about the tortures inflicted upon little children?

See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out! See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire! It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the face of all in hell—despair, desperate and horrible!

Such are the words chosen by the Rev. Mr. Furniss to describe the results of incurring the displeasure of one's all-loving and boundlessly merciful Father in heaven. One is inclined vaguely to wonder whether the Rev. Mr. Furniss will himself be present when the roll-call of the saints is called in paradise, or whether—perhaps from the depths of an oven—he will answer to his name elsewhere.

Farrer declared that he would die as the beasts that perish "rather than his worst enemy should endure the hell described by Tertullian, or Minucius Felix, or Jonathan Edwards, or Dr. Pusey, or Mr. Furniss, or Mr. Moody, or Mr. Spurgeon, for one single year." Yet there are missionaries in China to-day who glory in the fact that their theology is the theology of Spurgeon.[1] Is it to be wondered at that we Chinese have not yet embraced the Christian faith when this is the form in which it reaches us?

My readers will doubtless agree that the most barbarous form ever taken by the damnation theory was the doctrine that the heathen child who died in infancy

[1] See page 304.

was no less assuredly damned than the most perverse of adult sinners. I am not at all sure that this appalling doctrine of infant damnation does not still carry on a spider-like existence in some of the dark and dusty corners of missionary Christianity. Certainly it was not extinct within the memory of men still living.[1] I sincerely trust that the humane public of Europe and America to whom this Appeal is addressed will in future take care that the funds so lavishly subscribed by them for the advancement of Christianity in China are not used to support or disseminate teachings of this abominable nature. Is it to be wondered at that intelligent non-Christians have sometimes asked whether there can be any truth whatever in a theological system that finds room for such revolting tenets? A mental self-presentment of the tortures of hell doubtless gives to people of a certain type of morbid temperament a peculiar kind of sombre happiness. But the "Puritan temperament," if I may call it so, is not, so far as I can judge, common among the Chinese, nor is there any reason to suppose that it will become so: and I venture emphatically to declare on behalf of all my countrymen that we are quite prepared to face the loss, for all time, of any exquisite delight that may conceivably be inherent in the imaginative contemplation of innocent babes writhing in the flames of hell.

May I be so greatly daring as to close this chapter with a little piece of autobiography? When I was first initiated into the mysteries of the Christian religion I

[1] "A French society, called the Saint-Enfance (1843), has spent nearly 80,000,000 francs (£3,200,000) in a half-century to ensure the baptism of heathen children at the point of death; China has been the chief beneficiary of this puerile extravagance."—Salomon Reinach's *Orpheus*, pp. 402–3 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons).

found a great deal to perplex me, not only in the Christian theory of the origin of evil and the incredible Pauline theology relating to the fall and redemption of man, but also in the character attributed to Satan himself.[1] It seemed clear to me that inasmuch as there are in mankind infinite degrees of virtue and viciousness, there must be a partition of infinite thinness, morally speaking, between those who have just succeeded in scraping themselves into heaven and those who have been declared just bad enough for hell. Thus an infinitesimal difference between two men in respect of their moral natures or the moral quality of their actions must in untold multitudes of cases bring about the eternal misery of the one and the eternal bliss of the other. Even the hypothesis of purgatory does not afford a satisfactory explanation of this peculiar aspect of divine justice. There can be no perceptible moral gap between the *most wicked* of the sojourners in purgatory and the *least wicked* of the inhabitants of hell; yet the rascals of purgatory will sooner or later ascend to the region of eternal happiness, while hell's least ignoble souls are for ever damned. This seemed to my youthful mind a very perplexing situation, and, so far as I could see, the only possible escape from it was either to deny the existence of hell altogether, and thereby render Satan homeless, or to persuade oneself that hell was really a place (or condition) of comparative comfort. To use the words of the Christian apologist imagined by Leslie Stephen: "Hell shall have no more than a fine equable temperature, really good for the constitution; there shall be nobody in it except Judas Iscariot and one or two more;

[1] On the Pauline theology (as it is held at the present day) for which "no term of reprobation and contempt can be too strong," and which possesses "no redeeming feature in its absurdity and cruelty," see Sturt's *Idea of a Free Church*, pp. 234 *seq.*

and even the poor Devil shall have a chance if he will resolve to mend his ways."[1]

Again, when as a very young student I first encountered the Christian belief in the eternal punishment of infants who died unbaptised, these were among the whimsical imaginings that took shape within my heathen mind. So far as I could gather, the decree of damnation for the unbaptised infant emanated from God or was sanctioned by him; or at least he, being by hypothesis omnipotent, could have rescinded it if he would. Thus my sympathies went out least of all to God, who was merely depriving himself of the services of a potential angel; a great deal more to the infant itself, who was condemned to an "eternity of woe," as the Christian hymnal has it[2]; but most of all to the Devil, the lord of hell, whose detestable duty it would be to receive the little damned soul and assign it to its appropriate sphere of torture. What would happen, I wondered, if the Devil refused, even at the bidding of Almighty God, to find a place, in his abode of eternal misery, for an innocent child? What if he said to God: "Take away your victim! My hell is for the wicked, not for sinless children. Create a new hell for babies if you will—you are omnipotent and can do so; but you must create another Satan to rule it, or be yourself its lord." God might be angry, but as he had already damned the Devil and presumably had no reserve of punishments to inflict upon him, the divine wrath would spend itself in vain. Possibly the wretched infant, rejected by both God and Satan, and left to wander aimlessly in the interstellar spaces, might, after the lapse of untold ages arrive by some happy chance at the portals of heaven. Even then the Almighty might

[1] *An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 42 (R.P.A. Reprint).
[2] *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, No. 289, st. 4.

be stern as ever, and pitilessly order the gates to be locked and barred; but perhaps the doorkeeper Peter, not yet degenerated to sycophantic angelhood, might still be human enough to accept the bribe of a baby's smile.

CHAPTER XII

PRAYER, FAITH, AND TELEPATHY

ONE of the many religious questions on which we Chinese find missionaries at variance among themselves and on which we have not succeeded in obtaining a clear and unequivocal statement of Christian teaching, is the question of Prayer.

"God answers prayer." This seems clear and succinct enough for anybody; and so it would be if all three terms of the proposition were clearly defined. Let me explain at the outset that I am so far from denying what is called the efficacy of prayer that I cannot even imagine such a denial being made in sincerity by any thoughtful person. At first sight the question "Have prayers any efficacy?" might seem to be merely another way of saying "Does God answer the prayers of those who pray to him?" But the two questions are really quite distinct; and the man who ventured to give a negative or agnostic reply to the second, might without any inconsistency answer the first in the affirmative.

To admit that prayer is or may be efficacious, by no means implies a belief that a personal God (a God who made man in his own image) listens to the petitions of his worshippers and grants the boons asked for by causing something to happen which would not have happened if the prayers had not been uttered. If, indeed, it be

further granted (as I for one am fully prepared to grant) that a prayer is, as a matter of fact, sometimes followed by events which would not have occurred if there had been no prayer, there is nothing even in this admission that would necessarily meet with dissent from agnostic or atheist. I must try and make this position clear. A devout Christian mother, let us say, is watching at the bedside of her child, who is believed to be dying. In the intervals of nursing she prays earnestly to God that her child may not be taken from her; and after a long and dangerous illness the child at last recovers. The doctor, knowing it had been a case of "touch and go," asserts that the child owes its life to the devoted nursing of the mother; the mother, on the other hand, is positive that its recovery was the outcome of her prayers. Now I do not think that any one—even if he rejects as inconclusive the evidence of the existence of a personal God—will have any difficulty in admitting, after a little consideration, that doctor and mother may both be equally right. While the mother was engaged in prayer she, as a Christian, firmly believed that her prayer was listened to by the God to whom it was addressed; and her faith in God's power and goodness gave her the further assurance that he was able to preserve her child's life. She rises from her knees comforted, fortified, and with renewed cheerfulness, and is able to devote herself to the nursing of her child even more earnestly and successfully than before. Had she not prayed, had she had no faith, her own health might have broken down and the child might have died through lack of a mother's care; as it is, her faith gives her hope, the joy that hope brings with it adds new strength and energy to her physical frame, and the child lives. I can well imagine an earnest Christian asking with some indignation what

further proof is needed that God grants the prayers of his people.

The admitted facts [he may say] are that the woman prayed for her child's life; that its life was spared; and that if she had not prayed it would have died. What more do you want? What right have we to criticise God's methods because they seem capable of a non-miraculous explanation? The laws of the universe are God's laws; is God to be debarred from acting through the laws of which he himself is the author?[1]

This seems plausible enough until we perceive that we can really trace the concatenation of causes no farther back than to *the mother's faith.* Faith in what? When we look for an answer to that question we are merely groping among hypotheses. God may or may not be enthroned above it all; our chain does not reach, *so far as we can see,* to the feet of God. The mother whose case we are considering had faith in the Christian God, and therefore she prayed to him and to no other. Had she been a native of South-eastern Asia she might have prayed to Buddha, for the average Buddhist does pray, in spite of his theoretical acceptance of the theory of inexorable law. Had she been a North-American Indian she might have prayed to Wohkonda, the Master of Life; as a Chinese, she might have prayed to the local *t'u-ti* or to Kuan-yin, or to the deity who presided

[1] Professor Sanday, in *The Life of Christ in Recent Research,* remarks that "an act is no less divine because it is fundamentally according to law." Quite true, as one of his critics observes, "but does not such a reply involve this objection? To speak of a miracle as a 'divine act' carries the inference that an ordinary occurrence is not divine" (W. Jones Davies in *The Hibbert Journal,* July, 1908, p. 938). And similarly we may say: If every occurrence is divine, then why draw distinctions between one occurrence and another? Why say, "Here we trace God's finger," if God's finger is acknowledged to be in everything?

over the particular disease from which her child was suffering; as an ancient Egyptian she might have prayed to Amon or to Osiris; as a Roman, to Æsculapius; as a Moslem, to the God revealed by Mohammed; as a native of Vedic India, to Varuna or Agni; as a Zoroastrian, to Ahuramazda; as a Hottentot, to Tsui-goa; as an ancient Mexican, to Pachamac[1]: and we have no proof whatever that so far as the child's restoration to health was concerned the Christian prayer was of any greater efficacy than any heathen prayer would have been if uttered in equally earnest faith.

The Papists on the one side [remarked the good Protestant Robert Burton] stiffly maintain how many melancholy, mad, demoniacal persons are daily cured at St. Anthony's Church in Padua, at St. Vitus's in Germany, by our Lady of Loretto in Italy, our Lady of Sichem in the Low Countries. . . . They have a proper saint for every peculiar infirmity: for poison, gout, agues, Petronella; St. Romanus for such as are possessed; Valentine for the falling sickness; St. Vitus for madmen, etc. . . . Jasper Belga, a Jesuit, cured a mad woman by hanging St. John's Gospel about her neck, and many such. . . . Æsculapius of old, that counterfeit god, did as many famous cures; his temple (as Strabo relates) was daily full of patients, and as many several tables, inscriptions, pendants, donaries, etc., to be seen in his church, as at this day at our Lady of Loretto's in Italy. . . . The same Jupiter and those bad angels are now worshipped and adored by the name of St. Sebastian, Barbara, etc. Christopher and George are come in their places. Our Lady succeeds Venus, as they use her in many offices; the rest are otherwise supplied, as Lavater writes, and so they are deluded."[2]

Medical men nowadays fully recognise the curative

[1] See Max Müller's *Last Essays* (Second Series), pp. 36 *seq.*

[2] *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pt. ii., sec. i., mem. iii.

value of faith, and perhaps the majority of them would whisper that faith in what or in whom was a matter of minor consequence. The object of faith may be a lucky pebble, or the touch of a king's finger, or a piece of wood purporting to be a portion of the "true Cross," or the holy water at Lourdes, or a holy coat, or Mrs. Eddy's pseudo-metaphysics, or the tomb of St. Thomas of Canterbury, or the relics of Ti-tsang Bodhisatva at Chiu-hua-shan in China: the only thing that is really of consequence seems to be the sincerity of the faith. "Thy faith hath made thee whole," said Jesus.[1] Many are apt to assume when they read the "faith" passages in the gospel that it was faith in Jesus as the Son of God —in the divinity of Jesus—that was meant; whereas all that was signified seems to have been a belief in Jesus' power to heal bodily disease. It is admitted that Jesus was not the only remarkable healer of his time, indeed he himself added to the number of faith-healers[2]; and there is no reason to suppose that his patients, even after they had been restored to health by his touch, were converted to a belief in his Godhead.[3]

[1] For further evidence of the great stress laid by Jesus on *faith as faith*, see Matt. xxi., 21-2; Luke xvii., 6.

[2] See Matt. x., 1, 8.

[3] "When Jesus asked men to have faith in him he was not requiring their assent to a Christological creed," etc. (Dr. Henry Goodwin Smith, in *The Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1907, pp. 142 *seq.*). Prof. Estlin Carpenter (*First Three Gospels*) says: "The real force which worked the patient's cure dwelt in his own mind; the power of Jesus lay in the potency of his personality to evoke this force." *Cf.* also S. J. Case, who in his review of Warschauer's *Jesus: Seven Questions*, remarks that Jesus' "power to heal did not differ in kind from that which other good men of his day possessed, and was dependent for its effect upon the patient's own mental attitude" (*American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, p. 460). *Cf.* also Dr. A. T. Schofield's article on "Spiritual Healing" in *The Contemporary Review*, March, 1909, pp. 298–304. "Of course," he says, "the first idea in all ages and in all countries has always been that it is the object of faith that effects the cure; in short, that it is objective and

Leuba is undoubtedly right [says Prof. William James] in contending that the conceptual belief about Christ's work, although so often efficacious and antecedent, is really accessory and non-essential, and that the "joyous conviction" can also come by far other channels than this conception. It is to the joyous conviction itself, the assurance that all is well with one, that he would give the name of faith *par excellence*.[1] The name of "faith-state," by which Prof. Leuba designates it, is a good one [says Dr. James in another place]. It is a biological as well as a psychological condition, and Tolstoy is absolutely accurate in classing faith among the forces by which men live. The total absence of it, anhedonia, means collapse."[2]

The recognition of the reality of faith-cures is nothing new. The author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* quotes a learned opinion to the effect that doctors cannot hope to cure their patients unless "with a true faith they call upon God, and teach their patients to do the like."[3] Nowadays most doctors leave the praying to the patient and to the parson; but few of them would deny that in certain circumstances and in respect of certain types of disease faithful prayer may be of far more value than drugs. Burton quotes a piece of advice, to the effect that sick persons should first of all pray to God "with

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not subjective; but when it is carefully noted that however many and various are the objects in which faith is reposed the cures are always the same, it is clear that the object cannot be the active agency. For instance, equally credible cures are recorded from faith in idols, fetishes, charms, repulsive objects, or powders or draughts; apparatus such as a thermometer or special bits of wood and iron; or in the vision at Lourdes, or the holy coat of Treves, or in relics of all sorts; or in kings or holy men, or in trees, flowers, fruits; or in impostors such as Dowie, or in systems of faith, or in the gods of Greece or Egypt; or in a thousand other objects, in themselves powerless."

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 246-7 (10th impr.; Longmans, 1904).

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 505.

[3] Burton's *Anat. of Mel.*, pt. ii., sect. i., mem. iii.

all submission and penitency," then confess their sins, and finally take some medicine.[1]

No man who has studied history [says Huxley] or even attended to the occurrences of everyday life, can doubt the enormous practical value of trust and faith; but as little will he be inclined to deny that this practical value *has not the least relation to the reality of the objects of that trust and faith.* In examples of patient constancy of faith and of unswerving trust, the "Acta Martyrum," do not excel the annals of Babism.[2]

The fact that prayer is far from being confined to Christianity to-day, and formed an important part of the religious lives of people who lived ages before Christ was born, is not allowed to perplex the mind of the devout Christian. The universality of prayer, he points out, is one of the surest proofs of its efficacy, for people do not persist in doing things that experience shows to be of no avail.[3] Here I find nothing to cavil at, for the efficacy of prayer is not in dispute. But he will very likely go on to assert that prayers addressed by heathen worshippers to stocks and stones are answered (when they have any effect at all) only by the One God revealed by Judaism and Christ, the All-Father who bestows a share of his love and pity even on those who deny his name. Thus here we have a definite proof, says the Christian triumphantly, that "God 's in his heaven, all 's right with the world!"

Well, but if God answers heathen prayers in the same manner as he answers Christian prayers there ceases to

[1] Burton's *Anat. of Mel.*, pt. ii., sect. i., mem. iii.

[2] *Science and Christian Tradition* (Eversley ed.), p. 214. (Italics not in original.)

[3] Surely, says Seneca, we men would not agree in addressing prayers to "surda numina et inefficaces deos" unless we found by experience that we derived benefit from such prayers (*Ben.*, iv., 4, 1).

be any reason—so far as the matter of prayer is concerned—why the idolaters should be coaxed away from their stocks and stones. If they were to lose faith in their "idols" and were persuaded to give an intellectual assent to one of the numerous forms of Christianity, they might come to feel, in time, that they had lost more than they had gained by the exchange. The "faith-state," once destroyed, does not easily re-create itself under new conditions. Setting this question aside as not strictly relevant, what is to be said when we hear of favourable responses being granted not only to the prayers of the heathen, but also to those of notorious evil-doers, and even to prayers for help and protection in the commission of actual crime? Does this support the view that a personal God, all-good, all-powerful, and omniscient, is the direct dispenser of the benefits derived from prayer?

> We make nothing [said the Lord of Montaigne] of invoking God's assistance in our vices, and inviting him into our unjust designs: "quae nisi seductis nequeas committere divis"; the covetous man prays for the conservation of his vain and superfluous riches; the ambitious for victory and the good conduct of his fortune; the thief calls him to his assistance, to deliver him from the dangers and difficulties that obstruct his wicked designs, or returns him thanks for the facility he has met with in cutting a man's throat; at the door of the house men are going to storm or break into by force of a petard, they fall to prayers for success, their intentions and hopes full of cruelty, avarice, and lust.[1]

This matter might lead us into some strange by-paths of thought if we had space to pursue it. Human nature is a marvellously complex thing, and I suppose there is

[1] Montaigne's *Essays:* "Of Prayers."

no doubt that many persons who commit criminal acts are very far from being conscious of their own iniquity or from regarding themselves as limbs of Satan. The housebreaker may feel that he is avenging the cause of the "higher righteousness," or that he is warring against an unjust and corrupt social system, or that the motives which impel him to the defiance of mundane laws are somehow justifiable in the sight of God if not in the sight of man. There is good reason to believe that even murderers have sometimes acted with complete confidence in their own rectitude, and have gone to the scaffold with the belief that they are being foully wronged. I do not refer only to assassins who in times of political unrest have been led into crime through the promptings of a perverted patriotism; I would include many perpetrators of the ordinary murders that from the point of view of the newspaper-reader or juryman can have been inspired only by the most sordid or detestable of motives. We must allow, I think, that even robbers and cutthroats are not necessarily acting a hypocritical part if—as still happens in the more backward and superstitious of Christian as well as of heathen lands—they bend the knee in prayer and ask God, or a favourite saint, to bless their deeds of violence. It is not surprising that criminals should be religious, for human nature is full of inconsistencies. What seems truly astonishing—on the assumption that the Christian God alone is directly responsible for the fruits of prayer—is that the praying criminal seems to derive as much benefit from his impious petitions to the Deity as his law-abiding neighbour derives from prayers uttered in equally strong faith and with more innocent intent. There can be little doubt that the Spanish or Italian brigand who kneels before the crucifix by the wayside and asks for favour and protection from God or his patron saint does

actually—like the mother who prayed for her sick child—derive strength and confidence from the act of prayer, and that he is more likely to bring off his next *coup* with success than if he had not prayed. If you insist that it is through the direct action of a pitiful God that the mother gains new cheerfulness and hope from her trustful prayers, will you also admit that it is by the direct action of God that the brigand gains new vigour and self-confidence in the prosecution of his schemes of pillage or murder?

A theory whereby we may, if we will, account for the efficacy of certain types of prayer without throwing any direct responsibility on God or even necessarily postulating his existence, is to be found among the suggestions of that attractive and daring thinker Frederick Myers, whose name will always be green in the memory of those who realise the supreme importance, to humanity, of the psychical studies in which he was so deeply interested. This is no place to discuss at length the theory of the subliminal consciousness, with which no doubt most of my Western readers are familiar, and which finds—perhaps I may venture to say—all the readier acceptance among Orientals because it merely puts into fairly definite shape a portion of a theory in which for ages past we have more or less explicitly believed. Myers, indeed, seemed anxious to avoid entangling himself in the meshes of pantheism; but his "infinite life,"[1] in which every human personality has its original home and to which every individual soul may under certain conditions withdraw itself for the purpose of imbibing fresh draughts of energy, is certainly suggestive of the "world-soul" of Eastern pantheistic philosophy.

According to Myers—and he is supported by a large

[1] See *Human Personality*, vol. ii., p. 313, and many other passages.

amount of psychological and pathological evidence—the conscious or "supraliminal" Self is not the only Self, and not the most important Self, that we possess.

There exists, [he says] a more comprehensive consciousness, a profounder faculty, which for the most part remains potential only so far as regards the life of earth, but from which the consciousness and the faculty of earth-life are mere selections, and which reasserts itself in its plenitude after the liberating change of death.[1]

In more technical language he maintains the same view thus:

I regard each man as at once profoundly unitary and almost infinitely composite, as inheriting from earthly ancestors a multiplex and "colonial" organism—polyzoic and perhaps polypsychic in an extreme degree; but also as ruling and unifying that organism by a soul or spirit absolutely beyond our present analysis—a soul which has originated in a spiritual or metethereal environment; which even while embodied subsists in that environment; and which will still subsist therein after the body's decay.[2]

We need not here consider the question of whether Myers was justified in supposing that the available evidence proved the individual's survival of bodily death[3]: the point that more immediately concerns us

[1] *Human Personality*, vol. i., p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 34.

[3] There have been, of course, numerous criticisms of the theories advocated by Myers, especially as regards their bearing on the "life after death." Not the least interesting observations are those of R. B. Arnold, in his *Scientific Fact and Metaphysical Reality*, pp. 334 *seq.* (Macmillan & Co., 1904). He admits the importance of the evidence collected by Myers and his colleagues, but says that "the explanatory reasoning was somewhat vitiated by the treatment of the 'subconscious self' as though it were some separate type of existence, somewhere away in 'infinity.' . . . The subconscious has been well expressed as the

is the possibility that human personality not only far transcends the utmost limits of the normal consciousness, but may even be connected, through the medium of the unplumbed depths of the subconscious self, with the ultimate reality, the infinite life, the world-soul in which (it may be) we all live and move and have our being. Many of the phenomena relating to telepathy, teleæsthesia, hypnotic and ordinary sleep, disintegration of personality, sensory automatism, self-suggestion, trance, ecstasy, so-called devil-possession, and some of the experiences connected with the "inspirations" of genius and the visions of mysticism—these and other peculiarities of the human organism can best be explained, according to Myers and his colleagues and successors, on the hypothesis that under exceptional or more or less abnormal conditions the subliminal faculties—that is, the faculties that usually remain *below the threshold* of normal consciousness—may assume control, and even

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neural *mechanised* background of consciousness. . . . Thus the subconscious self is not an entity somewhere away in the stars, but it is only postulated to explain the *full* working of mind, matter, and ether, including—and in their ultimate reality transcending—the 'ordinary' activities of our organisms, as is possibly already indicated in reported telepathy," etc. From another point of view, the criticisms of Prof. W. R. Inge (*Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 181-3) deserve attention. He points out, as others have done, the unphilosophical attitude of the "individualist" who "can hardly think of immortality except as survival in time (time being to him absolutely real)." But the unphilosophical Christian's attitude toward the eschatological problems of his own faith are, after all, cast in a very similar mould. The man-in-the-street, whether the street and the man be in China or in Europe, is either totally ignorant of, or has a hearty contempt for, the theories of a Berkeley or a Kant. He will kick a lamp-post and expect to be congratulated on having achieved a brilliant refutation of idealism. As for space and time, he is just as certain that they are "real" as he is of the existence of the lamp-post. At the same time it would not be difficult to show that such arguments as those used by Dr. Inge by no means stultify the survival theory propounded by Myers in his great work on *Human Personality*.

effect a temporary effacement, of the supraliminal consciousness of ordinary life. It is further supposed that man may, by an act of combined faith and will dive into his own subliminal consciousness and refresh himself in its life-giving waters, undergoing thereby a process of purification and re-invigoration that renders him far better able than before to face the troubles and perplexities of daily life. It is almost a necessary corollary of this theory that the act of prayer, provided it is faithful and sincere, is one of the simplest and most effective methods of immersing the dusty and travel-stained Self of ordinary consciousness in the clear and sparkling waves of the subliminal ocean. It is not surprising, then, that in spite of the frowns of many orthodox theologians, who are not disposed to look with favour on anything that is suggestive of Spiritualism, many good Christians have eagerly seized upon this theory as admirably capable of effecting a reconciliation, in respect of the important matter of prayer, between religion and science; and they do so with the more confidence when they know that on their side are ranged such prominent leaders of modern religious and scientific thought as Sir Oliver Lodge, Adolf Harnack,[1] and the late Dr. James. Thus we need not

[1] Those who are surprised at the inclusion of the name of Prof. Harnack in this list may perhaps be reminded of the following passage which occurs in the volume of lectures entitled *What is Christianity?* (Eng. trans., pp. 28-9). "Although the order of Nature be inviolable, we are not yet by any means acquainted with all the forces working in it and acting reciprocally with other forces. Our acquaintance even with the forces inherent in matter, and with the field of their action, is incomplete; while of psychic forces we know very much less. We see that a strong will and a firm faith exert an influence upon the life of the body, and produce phenomena which strike us as marvellous. Has any one ever yet drawn any sure line between the spheres of the possible and the actual? Who can say how far the influence of soul upon soul and of soul upon body reaches? No one. Who can still maintain that any extraordinary

be surprised to find the following passage in a sermon preached by the Rev. R. F. Horton, D.D., at a great Missionary Conference held at Liverpool in January, 1908:

In the act of prayer [he says] you dive down into what modern philosophers sometimes call the subliminal self—that is to say, that every self is made up of a certain consciousness which is conscious, and of a great deal of potential consciousness which is not for the moment conscious at all. The little bit of consciousness that is conscious at the moment is like the cork upon the surface of the sea that indicates the great net that goes down into the depths below. Now in the act of prayer, if it is real prayer, the wonderful thing is that you explore that subliminal consciousness. You get really down into yourself, and what happens there is very remarkable. Sir Oliver Lodge says that the one thing which has been established by psychological research is the reality of telepathic communication. When you get down beneath the surface of your own self—it is a most mysterious truth—you come into contact with other people there; you touch the wires of communication which connect you with people far away—you actually influence the thought and the feelings of persons on the other side of the globe. It is one of the mysterious facts of modern

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phenomenon that may appear in this domain is entirely based on error and delusion? Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and the inexplicable there is no lack. In our present state of knowledge we have become more careful, more hesitating in our judgment, in regard to the stories of the miraculous which we have received from antiquity. That the earth in its course stood still; that a she-ass spoke; that a storm was quieted by a word, we do not believe, and we shall never again believe; but that the lame walked, and the blind saw, and the deaf heard, will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion." It may be mentioned, by the way, that many Christian missionaries are still assuring unlettered Chinese audiences that the very things which Harnack says "we do not believe, and we shall never again believe," did, as a matter of historic fact, take place. This is one of the principal justifications for the present Appeal.

psychology, but it is indisputable; and it reveals the truth, which we have held all along, that by praying for people we directly help them; that if you give yourself to prayer for a person, we will say, in the mission-field, the very act of prayer brings you to the point where telepathic communication is carried right through to the soul far away; and that fact, which is familiar to us all, is becoming a scientific fact, a psychological fact established by inquiry, experiment, and verification.[1]

Now with the substance of this interesting and clearly expressed passage many of us will hesitate to disagree. There are non-Christians who could assent to its propositions (perhaps expressed in slightly different phraseology) just as readily as Christians, for (as should be carefully noted) they are dependent on no theological dogmas or formulated religious system whatsoever. If there really be such a thing as telepathy (and the evidence in its favour is now regarded by many competent judges as conclusive), scientific investigators will certainly drag it, sooner or later, out of the obscurity in which it has hitherto lurked and oblige it to undergo as patient and thorough an examination as any other natural law or process cognisable by science. But the question of the existence of a God or of the truth or falsity of this or that system of religious doctrine is not necessarily affected by the establishment of the truth of telepathy. Moreover, as the Rev. R. F. Horton must have well known, his view that prayer acts telepathetically does not yet meet with the universal acceptance of theological experts. Some authorities condemn in no measured terms the proposed alliance between religion and the philosophy of the subconscious,

[1] *Prayer and the Divine Source of Power* (London: Student Volunteer Missionary Union, Chancery Lane).

on the ground that it implies a reversion to primitive modes of religious thought which we have long outgrown.

Extremes meet [writes a well-known theologian] when the objective efficacy of prayer is explained and defended by reference to the supposed connection of mind with mind, and of the human mind with God, through the subconscious. If telepathy be true, then of course my prayer for another may produce effects in his mind and body. Myers's speculation concerning a possible medium for telepathic vibrations now reappears as an assertion that prayer recognises "waves of psychic force." . . .[1] The warm idealism, and even the practical insight, that sometimes accompany such crude mythology, do not lessen its crudity. . . . But, in any case, the appeal to the subconscious in proof of the efficacy of prayer is another instance of reversion toward the earliest and crudest religious philosophy.[2]

For my own part, I am not convinced that the theory to which Mr. Horton pins his faith is such a contemptible one as Dr. Coe seems inclined to think. But there is little doubt that the theory of the subliminal consciousness has been drawn out to extravagant lengths by clergymen and laymen who regard it as a new and valuable proof of the existence of a personal Deity. "I believe," says a preacher cited by Dr. Coe, "that the subconscious mind is the individual manifestation of the Universal Mind—God."[3] Perhaps this is true; perhaps, on the other hand, it is not true. Even in the former case some exceedingly important questions still remain unsolved. In what

[1] This quotation is from J. Brierley's *Religion and Experience*, p. 47.

[2] Prof. G. A. Coe, Ph.D., in *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, pp. 340-1.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

measure does the individualisation of the Universal Mind modify or destroy the perception of divine truth? To what extent does the divine cease to be divine when it individualises itself in the subliminal consciousness? Unless we know how we stand with reference to these matters, the knowledge that we possess a fragment of individualised divinity may be regarded as a doubtful benefit. Not the most devoted admirer or worshipper of his owm subconscious self will be presumptuous enough to assert that it invariably expresses itself in a manner suggestive of the infinite knowledge, power, and goodness ascribed to God. Dr. Coe hints that if the subconscious mind is divine it seems to disguise itself pretty effectually sometimes as a mumbler of "platitudes and ambiguities."[1] Moreover, it is noteworthy that different subconscious personalities give entirely different and often incompatible accounts of what constitutes religious truth. He who has been brought up in Christian surroundings and is himself a Christian may indeed find his religious outlook greatly widened when he experiences a "subliminal uprush," or when by some means or other he has obtained access to his subconscious self, but it is rarely, if ever, that the pronouncements of the subliminal self will be found to contradict, in essentials, the religious convictions of the supraliminal or normal mind. So far as I am aware, there is not a single example of a person who in the trance-state—that is, the condition in which the supraliminal consciousness is put to sleep and the subliminal becomes active—has testified to the truth of a religion with which in his normal state he was totally unacquainted or with which he was entirely out of sympathy. The Japanese trance-medium finds in his subliminal consciousness nothing to contradict the ordinary Japanese notions

[1] Prof. G. A. Coe, *loc. cit.*

regarding the deities of Shinto and Buddhism.[1] Hypnotise a Scots kirk-elder, and unless he has been surreptitiously dabbling in Eastern lore in his waking hours his friends need have no fear that in his subliminal raptures he will blasphemously murmur the praises of Krishna. Obtain access to the subconscious mind of a Chinese Taoist priest whose supraliminal intellect has never been influenced in any way by Christian teachings, and you may explore its deepest recesses without coming across the least trace of a consciousness of the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth.

[1] See Percival Lowell's *Occult Japan*, pp. 97 *seq.* (4th impr.).

CHAPTER XIII

SCIENCE AND PRAYER

RELIANCE on the telepathy argument to explain the efficacy of prayer may lead to unexpected results somewhat dangerous to the cause of so-called revealed religion; and we need not be surprised if the argument becomes less and less popular among the clergy, in proportion as the processes of telepathy pass under the dominion of natural science. A recent writer on the subject declares that prayer may be said to have efficacy, "not by a violation of natural order, but through telepathic agencies, which are part of that order."[1] Now if this be so, surely the result will be that as soon as telepathy, duly classed and ticketed, has taken its appointed place among facts of the natural order recognised by science, all prayers that depend for their efficacy on telepathic agencies will gradually become secularised in form, and finally lose all religious significance. If a man in China finds that by following certain printed rules, or by placing himself in the hands of a professor of telepathy, he can get into communication with the mind of his friend in America, it is hardly likely that out of mere respect for religious tradition he will long persist in submitting the process to sanctification by prayer. The operator of wireless telegraphy does not act on the supposition that the proper transmission of messages is

[1] *Some Problems of Existence*, by Norman Pearson, p. 121 (Edward Arnold, 1907).

dependent on his offering propitiatory sacrifices to the ether-demons; yet if the "natural order" includes telepathy as well as wireless telegraphy, it is difficult to see why prayers should be considered necessary or desirable in the one case and not in the other. Already, indeed, modern civilisation has witnessed the gradual encroachment by science on what was once regarded as the exclusive domain of prayer. Let us imagine that we are living in England in the early years of the reign of Queen Victoria. A fond father has just said good-bye to his emigrant son, who is going to Australia. With the son goes an older man who has promised to be the youth's protector, and who is believed by the father to be a man of probity and honour. Long after the ship has set sail, but before it has reached its destination, the father discovers clear proof that his son's companion is a man of bad character who has formed a plot to defraud his son of all his worldly possessions as soon as the vessel reaches Australia. The father is helpless. By the time he can communicate with his son by letter the rascal will probably have got away with his booty, and the son may be a destitute wanderer in a strange land. It happens, however, that the father is an extremely devout Christian and a sincere believer in prayer. As a matter of course, then, he spends many anxious hours in praying that his son's interests may be safeguarded by his heavenly Father, and that by special divine intervention the rogue's villainy may be unmasked. Such, we may suppose, would have been the procedure of a Christian father in the first half of the nineteenth century. And what would he do in similar circumstances at the present time? Obviously, he would send a telegram to meet his son at the first Australian port. He might pray, too? By all means—after his return from the telegraph office.

Doubtless we shall be told that all the inventions of modern civilisation are themselves gifts of God, and that if he chooses to grant our wishes through the medium of electricity our gratitude to him should not therefore be less than if, for our special benefit, he were to suspend the operation of a law of Nature. I do not for a moment wish to imply that science knows everything that can be known about the laws and forces of which it makes use. The ultimate mysteries of electricity, like those jealously guarded by the "flower in the crannied wall," are still beyond our reach, as every honest man of science readily acknowledges. It may be that the whole universe is interpenetrated by an infinite Spirit or guided by a Divine Being who possesses, or does not possess, the attributes of personality; but this does not alter the fact that the scientific methods resulting from the discoveries and inventions of modern times do usurp, to an ever-increasing extent, the territory over which Prayer formerly held undisputed sway. A mother's prayers may indirectly, as we have seen, be the means of saving her child's life; but when one of your great modern cities is attacked by plague or cholera do you ask God in prayer to take the disease away,[1] or do you reinforce your sanitary staffs and see to the drains? Possibly you do both; but there is little room for doubt as to which of the two methods enjoys the larger share of popular confidence.

The much-discussed question of the usefulness or otherwise of prayers for rain and fair weather is specially apposite to our present inquiry, for such prayers, from

[1] As in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 377:

"Thine awful judgments are abroad,
O shield us lest we die; . . . .

"Accept the sacrifice we bring,
And let the plague be stayed."

time immemorial, have been offered up on the hill-tops of China as well as within the churches of Europe.[1] According to the orthodox Christian theory, prayers for rain are just as reasonable, just as likely to meet with a favourable response, as any other form of prayer. That is to say, the personal God can, and sometimes does, in answer to the prayers of his people, provide them with rain which would not have fallen if they had not prayed. But although prayers for rain and fair weather are still retained in the Western prayer-books, and occasionally made use of, it may be assumed with some confidence that no man of science to-day believes in the power of such petitions to bring about a change in meteorological conditions.[2] No one doubts, of course, that prayers for rain may possess efficacy of a certain pragmatic kind. The act of prayer presupposes a more or less robust faith in the utility of such an act; and it must have happened again and again in both Eastern and Western hemispheres that people who were becoming disquieted by the sight of brazen skies and withering crops felt comforted and hopeful when they were told that public supplications for divine pity were being addressed to a heavenly power. Certainly in China, where droughts often occur, the offering up of official prayers for rain has, on numerous occasions, been the means of staving off tumults, and allaying popular discontent.[3] Official

[1] For examples of, and remarks on, Ancient Greek and other non-Christian rain-prayers, see Max Müller's *Last Essays* (Second Series, 1906), pp. 37 *seq.*

[2] Perhaps it is as well to explain that I am not ignoring the rather vague speculations of Sir Oliver Lodge in the first chapter of his *Man and the Universe.*

[3] A missionary writer tells an amusing story of some village priests in China "who, finding their god was supine in the matter of sending rain, bored a hole in his side and inserted a centipede" (Ritson's *Abroad for the Bible Society*).

prayers, at such seasons, are postponed as long as possible; thus time is gained, and meanwhile, any day the rain may come in obedience to normal meteorological law. But though prayers for rain may thus have a certain usefulness of their own, among a simple-minded people, we are not thereby justified in asserting that they possess objective efficacy. Surely we are prevented only by the present imperfection of our scientific knowledge from recognising that it is just as futile to pray for rain when skies are cloudless as it would be for a party of famishing explorers at the South Pole to pray for bananas to grow on an iceberg. The one proceeding seems less absurd than the other only because our botanical knowledge is in a more advanced stage at present than our knowledge of meteorology.

What tends to the survival of popular belief in the efficacy of supplications for a divine interference with the laws of nature is the fact that, as experience shows, events do quite frequently occur in accordance with the desires expressed in prayer. It would be astonishing, indeed, if this were not the case; but thoughtless people are only too ready to accept the theological suggestion that such events can have come about only through special divine intervention and in direct response to prayer. Let us suppose ourselves faced by these three facts: Rain is badly wanted, prayers are offered to God, rain falls. Now follow these important questions. Did the rain come in answer to the prayers? Is it quite certain that the rain would not have fallen if there had been no prayers? A very large number of ecclesiastics and laymen, and certainly the great majority of the Christian missionaries in China, would unhesitatingly answer "yes" to the first question, and most of them would either decline altogether to consider the second, or merely admit frankly that they could not possibly

answer it. But surely it is clear that the two questions are really one. So long as there is the slightest doubt as to whether the rain would or would not have fallen if no prayers had been offered, it is not logically justifiable to answer the first question with an unhesitating "yes"; unless, of course, the person who gives such an answer tacitly assigns to the question itself a meaning that was not in the mind of the person who asks it. If the rain was caused by the normal action of meteorological laws—so that, given the laws and an adequate knowledge of them, the rain could have been predicted by scientific experts, even if such experts were not aware that prayers were being said, and did not take such prayers into consideration—then it is not accurate to say that the rain has come as a consequence of the God-moving prayers of a thirsty population. If, on the contrary, rain fell when scientific experts (in spite of the postulated adequacy of their knowledge of meteorology) had ascertained that rain *could not fall*, then it would be permissible and justifiable to adopt the hypothesis that the event was due to a supernatural or supernormal cause, which might or might not be the will of a personal God. The fact that our knowledge of meteorology is not yet sufficient to enable us to foretell the state of the weather as positively as we can foretell the hour at which the moon will rise on a given day does not justify us in assuming that the laws of meteorology are not quite as regular and inviolable (or at least inviolate) as those that govern the movements of the celestial bodies.[1] Eu-

[1] "It would be positively immoral for us now," says Bishop Westcott (*Gospel of the Resurrection*, pp. 38–9), "to pray that the tides or the sun should not rise on a particular day; but, as long as the idea of the physical law which ruled them was unformed or indistinct, the prayer would have been reasonable, and (may we not suppose?) the fulfilment also." This passage is quoted by Mr. Philip Vivian in his work, *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), p. 52, and he adds the following simple com-

ropeans, knowing the true cause of eclipses, laugh at the Chinese for carrying out ceremonies that were apparently designed to assist the sun in withdrawing itself from the jaws of a hungry dragon. Perhaps they themselves may be greeted with the gibes of their own descendants for their simplicity in supposing that a religious ceremony could produce or avert a downfall of rain. Certain kinds of prayer, as has been admitted, may have a very real efficacy; but we have not the slightest reason for supposing that telepathy, or communion with our subliminal selves or with a spiritual world, has ever had the smallest effect of any kind on the ordering of the weather. This conclusion is in no way inconsistent with an admission of the possibility that man, in the ages to come, may be able to turn on the rain exactly when he wants it. We can assign no limits whatever to the powers which man may acquire in the course of his future evolutional development, or through his continual progress in the knowledge of the laws of nature. Perhaps the beings that populate Mars are using their canals for the storage of water selfishly stolen from the atmosphere of more humid planets than their own; possibly it is they who are responsible for the desiccation of the Euro-Asiatic plateau and the rainlessness of Central Australia. Even if this be so, we may rest assured that the Martian Canal Board does not consider it necessary to offer up prayers to the Earth, or to any other heavenly body, before carrying out its severely practical departmental duty of filching the terrestrial waters.

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ment with regard to the last eight words: "It is difficult to believe that these can really be the words of one of the Church's greatest scholars. To what extent will not bias influence the brain to use its powers perversely? It is far-fetched arguments of this kind that increase rather than dispel doubt in the normal mind, and especially when they are brought forward in all seriousness by the very pillars of the Church." With this comment I unhesitatingly concur.

It may strike many readers as unnecessary to discuss a question that they suppose has long ago been settled. No educated person now seriously believes, they may say, that prayer is of any avail, except through its effects on the person who prays, and possibly (by telepathy) on the person prayed for. But a glance at the journals published by missionaries in China will prove that prayer is resorted to on every possible occasion and in connection with every conceivable subject. In some circles prayer is so incessant and so protracted that the missionaries themselves have actually taken pity on their converts to the extent of providing them with knee-pads. I have before me a quotation from a letter in which it was observed that "we were led"—presumably by the Deity, though this is not explicitly stated—

to get straw knee-pads made, so that at the different services all might kneel in prayer, instead of standing up, as we usually did. The result has been excellent, a constant stream of prayer has been kept up at all the meetings, both men and women leading in prayer as they felt led. Often we were on our knees from half-an-hour to three-quarters without rising, and even longer. This "knee-drill" has had the effect of opening up the avenues of the hearts of the Christians in a way I have never noticed before.[1]

The following quotation will give some idea of what takes place at a really successful missionary prayer-meeting:

The Lord brought us to one accord in one place, and every heart seemed breathing out its earnest purpose. Prayer increased in volume and became more intense until there broke forth shouts, and then there followed a mighty movement of God's Spirit among us. Personally, I was

[1] *China's Millions*, Oct., 1909, p. 152.

not aware of any extraordinary influence except an influence to pray. I felt that the Lord led me to intercede; that the Holy Spirit led me to plead the Blood of Christ as I never pleaded the Blood of Christ in my life before—I mean with such earnestness and such continuance—that we might be preserved from everything false, fictitious, and spurious, and God, I believe, answered the prayer. A mighty time followed, in my own experience, in the afternoon.[1]

An account of a similar mighty time, elsewhere, reads as follows:

I shall never forget that wonderful day in Mukden, when it seemed as though a rushing mighty wind broke into the church, and the whole congregation, as if with one heart went down on its knees and burst into such a volume of prayer as I think I shall never hear again on earth. It was wonderful. I just wish you had heard it as we heard it; sometimes rising until it seemed like the roaring of the sea, and then coming down again to a little whisper, and then gradually rising again. And this for what?—crying for pardon on behalf of some one, of some number of men and women, who had begged us on their knees to pray for them. Then, suddenly, it ceased, and you would hear that great audience raising its voice in a hymn which we often sang. Shall I sing it to you?[2]

The hymn, needless to say, was duly sung.

It appears that one reason why praying must be so tumultuously and, as one is inclined to infer, confusedly engaged in, is that many repetitions are necessary before answers to prayer can properly be looked for. One quiet and simple petition to the Deity is not likely to bring a favourable response; it is apparently supposed that if the prayers of the faithful were granted on a first

[1] *China's Millions* p. 148. [2] *Ibid.*, June, 1909, p. 84.

application they would grow conceited. "God requires us to persevere," we are told, "because if, after the first or second prayer, a great inrush came into the Church, how puffed up we would get."[1]

These quotations show with sufficient clearness that evangelical missionaries in China are absolutely convinced that prayer is a universal panacea. They pray for everything they want, and if they get what they prayed for no shadow of doubt enters their minds that it came in direct answer to their prayers. For example, here is a paragraph which bears the title "Prayer Answered":

> For a few days during July the Girls' Day School was closed, partly on account of the hot weather we were having, partly because the teacher we had was unsuitable, and no other was immediately forthcoming. It was a real answer to prayer when Mr. Kiang, a Christian B.A. from one of the country villages, offered to make that his special work for the present.[2]

> If better room accommodation for prayer-meetings or Church services is considered necessary, this matter is straightway laid before the Lord, and though we find that consular or diplomatic assistance is by no means considered superfluous on such occasions, it is always the Lord, and the Lord alone, who is regarded as responsible for a successful issue.

> The Lord has granted our request regarding the obtaining of better accommodation. He has done great things for us: He has filled our mouth with laughter and our tongue with singing. Some perhaps thought we were asking too much, and could scarcely expect to get it; but

[1] *China's Millions*, Aug., 1909, p. 116.
[2] *Ibid.*, Dec., 1909, p. 187.

our eyes were unto our God; He knew all our circumstances and the need, and He has marvellously and abundantly provided for it. Though very difficult to get in Huapu, we found a house, and the ground on which it stands, to buy for $430. The Mission kindly granted us $500.[1]

All subscriptions to mission funds are regarded as coming in direct response to prayer. A recent publication states that the China Inland Mission "has in just over forty years received more than £1,000,000 sterling without any public collections or solicitations of funds, but solely in answer to prayer."[2] The following incident is related by a missionary as one of many similar proofs that God "hears the prayers of his people" with regard to pecuniary assistance. "One Saturday morning there was a deficit of nearly £8 for the week's bill, which had to be paid on that day. Before twelve o'clock a lady called, who was in the habit of contributing liberally, and brought two £10 notes as a thank-offering for the recovery of some property."[3]

[1] *China's Millions*, Oct., 1909, p. 158 *Cf.* the following passage from the same periodical, June, 1909, p. 89. "Kwangsinfu was a very anti-foreign city, and the people of the place made it their boast that, though there were foreigners in other parts, there were none in their city. But in the end of 1901 we managed to rent a house there. The Devil tried to turn us out. When the *literati* heard that we had settled there, they went to the mandarin and objected, But the mandarin said: 'The house has been rented to these foreigners, and nothing can be done.' Thus the Lord worked for us." No gratitude, be it observed, is awarded to the Chinese magistrate, nor is there any recognition of the diplomatic and warlike successes of the Western Powers whereby China had been compelled to open her gates to both trade and Christianity.

[2] *Faith and Facts* (Morgan & Scott). The quotation is from an account of the book given in *The Review of Reviews* of Jan., 1910, p. 87. The sapient and religious editor adds that this wonderful answer to prayer "is one of those phenomena to which men of science so-called frequently give the go-by."

[3] This occurrence might perhaps be judged more noteworthy if the lady had not already been "in the habit of contributing liberally."

That bibliolatrous missionaries should fervently believe in the objective efficacy even of the crassest form of petitionary prayer is hardly to be wondered at when we remember the clear and unambiguous promises alleged to have been made in reference to this matter by Jesus Christ himself.[1] "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Nor is it surprising that many Chinese, sunk in ignorance and superstition and already half inclined to believe that all foreigners wield miraculous powers, fall under the influence of skilful Christian preachers without really knowing or caring anything about the higher aspects of the Christian faith. It would be impossible to say how many Chinese have been induced to attend Christian meetings, or even to become nominal converts, in the expectation of being let into some of the secrets of the foreign magic. The heathen outsider constantly hears the wildest rumours of the wonderful things obtained by his Christian neighbours in the way of answer to prayer. If the Christian convert or the promising "inquirer" wants any material or spiritual "blessing" he is told to pray for it. If he receives the boon for which he prayed he is told—and he believes without difficulty—that it has come in answer to his prayer; in other words, that if he had not prayed he would not have got it. He has neither the power to disprove this nor the inclination to dispute it. If, on the other hand, the boon does not come, his missionary friends turn his disappointment into something approaching contentment by explaining

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Perhaps the most celebrated case of complete reliance on prayer as a means of obtaining funds for religious or charitable purposes is that of the well-known George Müller of Bristol. For some observations on that case, see Prof. William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 467–72.

[1] *Cf.* Matt. xxi., 21–2; and John xiv., 12–14.

that the Lord indeed listened with the closest attention to his prayer, but knew, by virtue of His omniscience, that to grant it would do him more harm than good, and that, therefore, in withholding the boon the Lord really answered his prayer in a far kinder way than by granting it! The convert may be rather bewildered by all this, but, once more, he is unable to disprove the argument and has no strong inclination to dispute it. Very likely he feels that he would have gladly risked the harm if only he could have obtained the boon, but this reflection he probably keeps to himself; and in course of time he may come to believe that all his prayers are heard by an ever-attentive Deity and invariably answered in the wisest and best possible way. Meanwhile the heathen learn with astonishment, mingled with a steadily-increasing envy (tempered, however, by distrust of the foreigner and his ways), that the God whom the Christians worship will do anything they ask him to do!

Writing of the "China Inland" missionaries, a shrewd Scottish observer has made the following remarks:

A species of thaumaturgy enters largely into their system. They here meet the Chinese on their own ground of spiritualism and sorcery, and in cases of sickness or trouble the missionaries seem ever ready to back the foreign against the native Deity, after the manner of Elijah with the prophets of Baal. In other words, they live by prayer, not privately merely, but often openly, and by way of challenging their opponents. When a patient dies for whose recovery special prayer has been made, and the petitioners are self-pledged to a successful issue, they do not look at the material cause of death, but examine the mechanism of their prayer as if it were an experiment in physics that had miscarried. When they want a free passage in a steamboat they pray for it overnight, and the

most hard-hearted shipping agent is unable to deny the naïvely-pious request preferred at 10 A.M. next day. Nothing of the most trivial kind happens to these good people but by miracle, that is to say, by special and continuous interpositions of the Almighty, with whose ideas they affect an easy familiarity which to minds reverentially constituted is rather shocking.[1]

That this writer was not wrong in saying that "the missionaries seem ever ready to back the foreign against the native Deity" may be proved by any one who cares to dip into the sometimes saddening and sometimes diverting pages of such a journal as *China's Millions*. The following passage is cited from the issue of June, 1909:

The Christians [in Manchuria] meet together and go down on their knees, and pray all together—not one man, but all together. A fine thing that. I think that it would be a good thing if you introduced it here. I was out in a village at Mukden, and I was talking to a man who was not a Christian at all, and do you know what he said to me? "I hear that that prayer-meeting in Mukden is a place of power," he said. A heathen telling us that the prayer-meeting was a place of power! At another place twenty or thirty men and women offered themselves for baptism. I said to some of them: "How did you first hear about Christ?" "Oh," they said, "you know, since the war our temple here has been destroyed. We have no temple to which to go to pray, but we can go to this prayer-meeting that the Christians have got up. We have been offering petitions there, and we have been getting answers." The first things that brought them to think of becoming Christians were the answers which they themselves and their friends had got by sending in requests at this Christian prayer-meeting. That is a great gain to us—a great gain.[2]

[1] Alexander Michie's *Missionaries in China*, pp. 33–4 (Tientsin, 1893).
[2] *China's Millions*, June, 1909, pp. 84–5.

Of the truth of the last assertion in this passage there is no doubt whatever. But is this the way in which the people of Europe and America wish the doctrines of Christianity to be disseminated in the Chinese Empire?

We frequently hear quaint things said of some of the converts, who evidently do not always understand what is expected of them in the matter of prayer. Of the conduct of some Chinese Christians at a prayer-meeting we read this: "Several of the leaders, men of much natural ability and force of character, appeared to be resisting the work by taking up much time *praying for others* or *explaining the gospel to God* in their prayers."[1] Perhaps what these able and forceful men were really trying to do was to explain to the Deity the particular interpretation of the gospel which happened to commend itself to the particular sect to which they belonged. Possibly it required a good deal of explanation. Anyhow it is difficult to see why they should be accused of "resisting the work" by praying for others. Surely their altruism was highly creditable to their goodness of heart, and was deserving of praise rather than censure.

All good "happenings," as we have seen, are ascribed to a miraculous act on the part of the Deity, generally in answer to the prayers of the faithful.[2] A glad pæan of rejoicing and thanksgiving went up from the

[1] *China's Millions*, Aug., 1909, p. 118. (Italics not in original.)

[2] After mentioning the death of the late Emperor and Empress-Dowager of China, the editor of *China's Millions* wrote: "There has been no great national upheaval, as, perhaps, might have been expected. Herein is cause for thanksgiving unto God" (March, 1909, p. 40). Now of this we may feel certain,—that if there had been an upheaval we should have been informed in due course by missionaries that here was a clear proof of God's abounding mercy: the political upheaval being doubtless intended by him to lead to a great moral upheaval in which Christianity would at last come to its own. This kind of thing may be pious, but it is uncommonly like cant.

Protestant missionaries in China when the anti-foreign province of Hunan, with its exclusive capital, Changsha, was thrown open, a few years ago, to foreign missionaries.[1] The Hunanese had long been regarded as the best haters and best fighters in China, and long after the rest of the empire was open to missionary activity Hunan kept its gates firmly closed against the foreigner.[2] It was not till after the troubles of 1900 and the fall of Peking that missionaries succeeded in firmly establishing themselves in the provincial capital. The China Inland Mission arrived in 1901, and eight years later there were representatives of no fewer than *eleven different Protestant sects or societies* in the city of Changsha alone. The opening of Hunan and Changsha was due, we are told, to prayer and to the intervention of God. We are also assured that prayer has been the means of advancing the prosperity of the missionary propaganda there. "Prayer opened those city gates, prayer will keep them open, and prayer will maintain the life of that Church continually."[3] We are told that on one occasion, when there was a difficulty about acquiring premises and the question of ways and means was being discussed with much earnestness, a Chinese convert ventured to remind the missionaries that according to their own tenets all they had to do was to pray! They took the hint—it seems astonishing that the plan had not occurred to them in the first instance—and "the result was that in the year 1903 the desired premises were obtained."[4] Another missionary in the same city writes thus:

[1] See p. 65.

[2] The Roman Catholics, however, were entrenched in Hunan long before the Protestants were able to obtain a footing there.

[3] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 106.

[4] *Ibid.*

Together we came to Changsha in 1901, and with heart knit to heart we worked together during the remarkable development and blessing of the succeeding years. God used Mr. Li to lead many to Christ, a number of whom are now preaching the gospel in various parts of Hunan. Working with us at present are evangelists Siao and Yang in the general work, and Chen and T'ien in the hospital work. We earnestly commend these young men to praying friends. You can greatly increase their efficiency by your prayers. For years Mr. Li's hands were held up by dear friends in Brooklyn, to whom we shall ever be grateful. Our return to Changsha was on a Tuesday, and the next day we attended the monthly union prayer-meeting of the Changsha Churches. How our hearts were stirred at the sight of over two hundred Changsha Christians gathered on a Wednesday afternoon to worship the living God! My thoughts went back seven years to the day when Mr. Li and I landed at Changsha and tremblingly walked through the city gate and up the magnificent main street of this beautiful capital,—this city that had been such a stronghold of anti-Christian and anti-foreign influence, and in which at that time there was but one little meeting-room in a small Chinese house, and not one native Christian. With gratitude and wonder I said: "What hath God wrought!"[1]

I have quoted these passages because they are interesting in view of later events. The paragraph last cited was published as recently as November, 1909. About *five months later* (April, 1910) the foreign mission buildings in Changsha were looted and destroyed, and the missionaries were fleeing for their lives.

The Changsha riots (judging from the meagre reports available at the time of writing) appear to have originated in popular discontent at the abnormally high price of food. The animosity of the people was primarily

[1] *China's Millions*, Nov., 1909, p. 166.

directed against their own officials, and was apparently only turned against the missionaries owing to the spread of false rumours of fresh European aggression in China and to the common Chinese belief that foreigners are responsible, directly or indirectly, for most of the empire's calamities.[1] But the fact that the riots were only partially connected with the popular hatred of foreigners can hardly be regarded as an adequate explanation of the disaster to the Christian cause and the destruction of mission property, if we accept the contention of the missionaries themselves that God, in answer to their prayers, daily and hourly works miracles on their behalf. When full reports of the occurrences reach us from persons concerned we shall doubtless learn from them that God's special interest in the Changsha missionaries and their work is still abundantly manifest; for though he allowed their buildings to be destroyed and their property to be looted, he nevertheless preserved their lives from a heathen mob that was clamouring for their blood. But it will be necessary for them also to find some plausible explanation of the strange facts that some of their number were drowned in the course of the journey down the Yangtse, and that the ship by which their boat was accidentally sunk was the very British gunboat that the Lord was sending up to Changsha with a view to their protection!

When Port Arthur was captured from the Russians

[1] One of the correspondents of *The North China Daily News* writes thus in a letter of April 18, 1910: "The real cause of the riot in Changsha would seem to be the old anti-foreign feeling, although the actual occasion was a sudden rise in the price of rice." The fact that certain mission stations in other parts of Hunan were also attacked or threatened is a very significant one; and there seems to be some reason for the suspicion that anti-foreign feeling throughout Hunan had gradually been gathering in force and might have ended in a simultaneous sanguinary attack on all foreigners in the province had it not been for the fact that the rice-grievance in Changsha led to a premature explosion.

by the Japanese in the late war the following reproduction of a press telegram from Russia appeared in *The Times* of January 5, 1905:

> The news has produced an impression of indescribable sadness. Among the working classes there is profound stupefaction. Their religious convictions make it impossible for them to believe that the fortress for which so many prayers have been said by the Emperor has fallen into the hands of the enemy.

It had been firmly believed by the Russian people—their priests and rulers had continually assured them—that "Holy Russia" and her armies and fortresses were under the special protection of Almighty God. In spite of this fact, and in spite of the most earnest prayers offered up by God's own imperial representative, the great Manchurian fortress was captured by people who were not even Christians, and whose prayers had all been addressed to false gods or to the Devil! "Stupefaction" was probably the best word that the correspondent could have selected to describe the state of mind produced by so shocking an occurrence.

Had Port Arthur not fallen, had the war ended favourably for Russia, there is no shadow of doubt but that the Russian masses would have been encouraged to believe that their success was in itself a triumphant proof of Almighty God's special love for the Russian people. Religion, indeed, is never at a loss to find excuses for such rough blows as the fall of Port Arthur and the flight of the missionaries from Changsha. It is a very simple matter to point out that the Russian defeat gave an impetus to the reform movement in Russia, and was therefore really a gain to the true interests of the Russian State; and that in allowing the destruction of mission property and the interruption of

missionary labours in Changsha the Lord was merely testing his people's faith and perhaps punishing his emissaries for having shown a tendency to excessive self-confidence and pride. Arguments like this, however, are rarely satisfactory except to persons who are already willing to "believe" without argument; they will not convince the sceptic.

We might perhaps look forward with hope to a gradual cessation of what I venture to call prayer-cant among Christian missionaries in China if it met with no encouragement from the religious circles in Europe and America by whom foreign missions are supported. But unfortunately it is not only imperfectly-educated missionaries and icon-worshipping peasants that believe in a God who works miracles in answer to prayer, and who in times of warfare or political strife interferes with the natural course of events in order to give victory to the side graciously favoured by himself. Even in some of the rectories of civilised England we may find traces of similar superstitions. In January, 1910, during the General Election, an English clergyman announced in the public press[1] that in his church there would be a "Special Thanksgiving Service to Almighty God for the timely deliverance of Woolwich and Plumstead from the hands of the Socialists and Sabbath-breakers. . . . The *Te Deum* will be used instead of the processional and recessional hymns." The vicar had apparently requested the Deity to secure the return for Woolwich of a parliamentary candidate whose political views coincided with his own, and his prayer was "granted." Thus, while for China we have an anti-Confucian and anti-Buddhistic God, and for Europe and Asia a pro-Russian and anti-Japanese God, it appears that for England, or for a certain parliamentary division

[1] See *Daily News*, Jan. 20, 1910.

in England, we have a God who is Conservative, Sabbatarian, and anti-Socialist! In the circumstances, the defeat of the Liberal candidate is hardly to be wondered at. He must have had but a poor chance of success against the combined influence of Heaven and the Vicarage. The advertised Thanksgiving Service, indeed, was not held, after all, for an episcopal order went forth for the cancellation of the arrangements; and *The Spectator*, commenting upon the incident, very properly denounced the vicar's proceedings as the act of an "ill-mannered fanatic."[1] But *The Spectator*, unfortunately, does not circulate among Christian converts in China; and the fanatics, who are with us in considerable numbers, know themselves to be gloriously exempt from episcopal supervision.

[1] *The Spectator*, Jan. 22, 1910.

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL PREJUDICES

MANY Protestant missionaries refuse to accept converts who are guilty of the sins of drinking intoxicating liquors, opium-smoking, and even tobacco-smoking. No objection is likely to be raised to these rules by any sincere well-wisher to the Chinese people; but it is difficult to see what scriptural or ecclesiastical authority can be quoted for refusing Christian membership to a man who declines to give up his occasional cup of wine or his pipe of tobacco. I am aware that an attempt has been made by earnest missionaries to show that the miraculously-produced wine at Cana of Galilee was an innocuous non-intoxicant beverage; but it can hardly be maintained that there is any biblical warrant for this well-intentioned theory, which the Governor of the Feast would probably have repudiated with vehemence had it been advanced by any of his guests.[1] It appears that the very strictness of the temperance regulations[2] in Christian circles in China may in some cases be productive of worse evils than either smoking or moderate drinking—namely, deceitfulness and hypocrisy. During a revival meeting at Honan at which many sinners were moved to confess their shortcomings

[1] See John ii., 10.

[2] "We have a rule—experience has made us adopt it—prohibiting the drinking of intoxicants even in moderation."—*China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 102.

in public, one man got up to say, "I have been smoking tobacco in secret, knowing that it was wrong for me."[1] Is it likely that this poor sinner was the only one of the flock who had thus yielded, on the quiet, to the temptations of the flesh? China, of course, possesses its temperance societies just like any Western country. The members of the *Tsai Li* society, for example (which flourishes in many parts of North China), are under a strict obligation to refrain from drinking and smoking; but no Chinese society, as far as I am aware, goes so far as to forbid its members to offer drinks and smokes to non-members. There are missionaries, however, who do not shrink from enforcing drastic rules of this kind. Referring to a few cases in which it had been found necessary to "discipline" the Church-members, a missionary writes: "There was a man charged with beating his wife, and another accused of *making a present of whiskey to another man.*"[2] These peculiarities of the Christian propaganda in China do not meet with serious disapproval on the part of right-minded Chinese —why, indeed, should they? We are grateful to the missionaries for setting a good example to our people in the matter of sobriety, just as we are grateful to them for their enthusiastic support of the Chinese Government in its efforts to abolish opium-smoking. But I have some doubts as to whether the missionaries are well advised in their attempt to persuade the Chinese that abstinence from smoking and drinking is a characteristically Christian virtue. I have heard the people of Scotland described as the sturdiest, the most progressive, and the most religious in Europe; I have never yet heard them described as the most sober. Is it wise to lead a Chinese convert to suppose that the Christian does not drink or smoke? Some day, perhaps, he will

[1] *China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 23. [2] *Ibid.*, Sept., 1909, p. 143.

make a journey to the treaty ports, or to foreign lands, and there he will make the blood-freezing discovery that multitudes of Western Christians—not laymen only, but ordained clergymen, and even a bishop or two—publicly consume their wine and tobacco and are not ashamed.

In questions concerning sexual morality the Christian missionary speaks with no uncertain voice. I am by no means convinced—in spite of the assurances of our Christian critics—that sexual vices are, on the whole, more prevalent in China than in some Christian lands. I have even heard Englishmen admit that in this matter there is not much to choose between England and China, and that if to a superficial observer it appears that the Chinese are more vicious than the English it is partly because they are less hypocritical and partly because of certain differences between English and Chinese law. But this is a point I am not disposed to argue. I grant that there is a great deal of vice in my country, and if the Christian missionaries—whether directly by their teachings or indirectly by their own most admirable example—can induce the people of China to grow more virtuous, we shall owe them an incalculable debt of gratitude. But in matters affecting morality, as in very many other matters, the missionary body seems to take it for granted that the Occidental practice—or perhaps I should rather say the Occidental code of precepts—is the norm or standard to which all the rest of the world ought to adjust itself. This is notably the case in respect of the question of concubinage. I do not propose to weary my readers with a disquisition on the laws and customs that govern the Chinese practice in this matter. I think it is only necessary to point out, for the purposes of my argument, that in China a concubine generally lives under the same roof with the principal wife; that

she often joins the household with the wife's consent, and even at her expressed wish; that her position carries with it certain legally-recognised rights, and that her lot is by no means necessarily, or generally, a hard one. It is true that the status of a concubine (*ch'ieh*) is socially and legally inferior to that of the wife (*ch'i*), but on the other hand she generally comes of a family that is poorer or lower in the social scale than that of the wife, and as a concubine she is often far happier and more comfortable than she would have been as the principal wife of a man of her own class. The existence of legalised concubinage in China by no means signifies—as Western observers too readily take for granted—that the Chinese people are sunk in licentiousness; it merely bears witness to the extreme importance, in Chinese eyes, of the raising of offspring with a view to the perpetuation of the ancestral *sacra*. If a married couple are childless, and likely to remain so, the husband is obliged, by the duty he owes to his parents and ancestors, to provide for the succession either by taking a concubine or by formally adopting the child of a brother or other near relative. Most men prefer to have heirs of their body rather than heirs by adoption; and the fact that by Chinese law the children of a concubine are fully entitled, as legitimate heirs, to inherit the family property and to carry on the ancestral rites is of itself a clear indication of the social reasons that have led the Chinese to establish concubinage as a legal institution. The system is not, indeed, without its abuses. Though a poor man rarely dreams of taking a concubine unless his wife is childless, rich men will avail themselves of the custom merely as a matter of self-indulgence. Probably it will be a beneficial thing for China, on the whole, and especially for the dignity of Chinese womanhood, when the legal recognition of concubinage is with-

drawn, and the missionaries are doubtless doing good by trying to influence public opinion on the matter; but under present social conditions, and so long as ancestral worship retains its supreme importance in the religious system of China, it is improbable that the efforts of the missionaries will meet with much success. In any case they are scrutinising Eastern manners with the aid of Western spectacles when they declare that concubinage is a necessary indication of corrupt morality.[1] It is difficult, indeed, to understand how they can even claim that it is contrary to their alleged revelation of the law of God.

Polygamy [as a recent writer has reminded us] only began to disappear among the Jews in the fifth century B.C., and so curious was the influence of the Old Testament on the early Christian Church that several of the Fathers could not bring themselves to condemn it, and it was not officially suppressed by the Church until A.D. 1060. Luther and the Reformers allowed it even later.[2]

[1] Describing the management of certain schools for women, a missionary writes thus: "During the present renaissance many applications for entrance have been received from women who have no desire for Christianity, but who have wanted to learn to read. The girls' schools were closed to them, and thus they have turned to the women's schools. *Often they are the second or third wives of officials, and in order to keep up the tone of morality, we do not think it wise to admit them.*"—*Woman's Work in the Far East*, Dec., 1909, p. 158. (Italics not in original.)

[2] *The Religion of Woman*, by Joseph McCabe, p. 37. Those who believe (on the authority of the Church) that to Christianity alone belongs the glory of giving honour to womanhood, may perhaps find reason, on a perusal of this work, for reconsidering the bases of their belief. See also Philip Vivian's *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), pp. 277 *seq.* Principal Donaldson (who surely cannot be regarded as an Antichrist) rejects the "prevalent opinion that woman owes her present high position to Christianity." He adds: "In the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favourable effect on the position of women, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity." (Quoted in D. G.

If the missionaries restricted their efforts to inducing rich men to get rid of their supernumerary female companions, public opinion would probably be strongly in their favour; but they need not count on much popular support on their attempts to persuade middle-aged men who have no children to desist from the practice of acting after the manner of Abraham. In a missionary's narrative occurs the following paragraph:

> On Thursday morning we left Shinlufang . . . and reached Sakaitsai. This place was somewhat out of our way, but Mr. Adam wished to see a convert, middle-aged and childless, who had taken a concubine. It was a modern version of the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. I fear our visit did no good.[1]

Here was a stout-hearted convert who quailed not even under the reproachful gaze of his spiritual mentor; but a subsequent paragraph intimates that he was subjected to "church discipline" all the same. As a well-known biblical episode is mentioned in connection with this case, perhaps it may be worth remarking that the Chinese theory with regard to a concubine's children is precisely the same as that of Sarah. "And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her."[2] A childless Chinese wife regards the children of her husband's concubine as her own. They, in turn, must treat her during her lifetime with all the respect due to a mother, and after her death they must sacrifice to her manes in accordance with the full rites of filial piety.

Ritchie's *Natural Rights*, 2nd ed. p. 172.) Would St. Paul have approved of female missionaries and of female preachers at prayer-meetings?

[1] *China's Millions*, Sept., 1909, p. 143

[2] Gen. xvi., 2.

When missionaries adversely criticise some of the characteristic features of Chinese life, their fault-finding is often due to the fact (unrecognised, of course, by themselves) that they are unable to adjust themselves to the Oriental point of view. When they think they are inculcating a higher morality it frequently happens that they are merely inculcating a different morality. In other words, one of the objects steadily kept before them is to persuade the Chinese that the Western code of ethics is the standard to which the rest of the world ought to be required to conform. To a great extent this inability to see things from other people's points of view is common to nearly every one. Perhaps one of the rarest of human qualities (if indeed it is to be found at all) is complete freedom from racial, political, social, and religious prejudices. Every one gets into a groove of some kind, and is apt to regard everything that cannot be fitted into the same groove as heathenish or uncouth. I once heard an Englishman declare that he could not tolerate American naval officers. The assertion seemed rather sweeping, and I asked the reason. After some probing I discovered it was because the officers of the American navy frequently yielded to the temptation of leaving the upper lip unshaved. Presumably a moustache does not prevent a man from navigating a ship or firing a gun unless, indeed, it be of an exaggerated German type, and gets in front of the owner's eyes; but the fact that a moustache (unaccompanied by a beard) is tabooed in the British navy, was quite enough to create a sturdy British prejudice against the adoption of such a facial adornment in the navies of other countries.[1] We all have pre-

[1] *Cf.* the English prejudice against American spelling, and *vice versa;* and the frequent assertion of Irishmen and Scotsmen that the best "English" is spoken in Dublin or in Inverness. When a well-bred Eng-

judices of this or some other kind. If we think we have none, let us question a candid and plain-speaking friend on the point, and we shall speedily find that hitherto we have deceived ourselves, and the truth was not in us. While freedom from prejudices is, of course, an ideal to be aimed at, there is a great deal to be said for the view that the man who professes to be without a prejudice, and to judge all things from the standpoint of a lofty impartiality, is a man whose utterances should be taken with extreme caution, and is quite possibly one whose judgments in most matters are hardly worth considering. We are all acquainted with persons of this type. But this does not justify the average Philistine's insular self-satisfaction, which, when it proves to be incurable, may generally be traced to that most deplorable of defects—a lack of imagination. It is this imaginative deficiency, surely, that is chiefly responsible for the terribly common belief that one's own particular moral and social code is the correct and normal one—the code by which all others should be tested and judged. To take a simple example: many Western travellers to China and Japan laugh at our chopsticks—our "nimble ones," as we call them—and think a knife and fork are more "civilised." Our own prejudices lead us to take precisely the opposite view. We think it is far more "civilised" to have our food prepared in tiny morsels that can be daintily manipulated by a pair of wooden or ivory sticks held in one hand, than to have it served in great slabs that require to be torn asunder by means of a four-pronged harpoon and a one-edged dagger. Perhaps neither method is intrinsically superior to the other. The food must be cut somewhere and somehow

lishman visits the United States for the first time, it generally gives him a disagreeable shock to hear himself described as speaking with an English "accent."

and perhaps some day it may come to be recognised in both East and West that the only way to eat like a gentleman (and here peeps out one of my own special prejudices) is to become a vegetarian. Not long ago a certain native official in China accepted a missionary's invitation to dinner. The food was served up in rather-old-fashioned European style, and one of the dishes consisted of a huge roast of beef which the missionary proceeded ostentatiously to carve on the table almost under his guest's nose. The official knew next to nothing of foreign customs, and had never dined in European fashion before. Many things surprised and almost shocked him—the long "grace," for instance, might well have been curtailed in view of the fact that he was not a Christian, and by no means likely to become one—but nothing struck him with so much disgust as the carving of the roast. Needless to say, he successfully concealed his feelings, but he rose from the table more convinced than he had ever been before that Western manners had not yet completely emerged from their primeval barbarity.

There are countless ways in which Western residents in China (not missionaries only), acting under the apparent impression that so long as Western good manners are preserved intact nothing else matters, constantly violate Chinese canons of good taste. The Chinese much dislike and often (among themselves) ridicule the Western practice of what may be described as non-amatory osculation. Western ladies and the members of most Western families in China think nothing of kissing each other in the presence of their Chinese guests and servants. The low dresses worn in the evening by Western ladies are, as most people know, considered by the Chinese to be shamelessly improper; but as missionary ladies do not offend in this respect, the subject need

not be enlarged upon. Some missionaries, however, betray in another direction their prejudices in favour of Western customs in the matter of clothing. In a recent missionary journal [1] appears a photograph of two female school-teachers—foreign-educated Chinese—who, though attired in the ordinary upper garment of their country, have adopted the Western skirt. Presumably a Western education has convinced them that the usual garments of a Chinese lady are immodest. It seems a pity that some sensible foreigner has not made it clear to them that so far as decency in clothing is concerned, the Chinese lady has nothing whatever to learn from her Western sisters.

Some Western usages are regarded as merely quaint or "funny"—the removal of one's hat as a mark of respect, for example, or the custom whereby each lady at a dinner-party is taken into the dining-room on the arm of a man. A Chinese guest at an English dinner-party once asked to be enlightened as to the reason for this custom, but he was merely laughed at as a queer fellow for having allowed such a problem to suggest itself to his whimsical mind. "How like a Chinaman," they said, "to ask a question like that!" The "Chinaman," in a subsequent private conversation, hazarded the suggestion that the practice is based on a polite fiction. The lady is so weak with hunger before she goes into the dining-room that she requires the support of a masculine arm to enable her to walk the necessary distance; but having fortified herself with the good fare provided for her at the table, she is strong enough, at the conclusion of the meal, to find her own way back to the drawing-room. But this explanation can hardly be regarded as adequate, for on the European continent the ladies are escorted out of as well as into the dining-room;

[1] *Woman's Work in the Far East*, March, 1909, *facing* p. 14.

which might suggest to an uncouth Chinese mind that having once been induced to enter that convivial apartment they are reluctant to leave it.

Needless to say, there are many Chinese habits and customs that are quite as ridiculous or as repulsive in European eyes as are certain Western customs in the eyes of the Chinese.[1] But I believe there is a good deal to be said for the view that the Chinese are able to adapt themselves to European customs much more readily, and also more gracefully, than Europeans can adapt themselves to the manners of China. The common Western notion is that the Chinese are blindly conservative, contemptibly arrogant, and utterly unable to perceive the good points of any civilisation but their own, and all this (be it said in a whisper) is very much what the East dares to think about the West.

Every one who knows anything about the painful history of the relations between China and the Western Powers is acquainted with the petty but acrimonious disputes that raged over the question of the *k'o-t'ou* (kow-tow). The *k'o-t'ou* is a kind of exaggerated obeisance of falling on both knees and touching the ground with the hands and forehead. If a European were to attempt to perform this rite he would be almost certain to make himself look ridiculous, not only in the sight of his own countrymen, but also in that of the Chinese. This would be due partly to the awkwardness of his movements consequent on his want of practice and partly to the shape and fit of his clothes. European garments, as we Chinese should have frankly recognised

[1] Frequent and noisy expectoration is one such habit (though that is not unknown outside of China), and another is the native practice—supposed to be complimentary—of using one's own chopsticks to place a morsel of food on a guest's plate. Chinese who wish to create a favourable impression among Europeans should place both of these practices under a most rigid taboo.

at the beginning, are in no way adapted, or adaptable, to the performance of this particular ceremony. Now we Chinese learn to perform the *k'o-t'ou* in our earliest childhood—for it is a gross mistake on the part of Europeans to suppose that it is an undignified act only imposed on a servile people by the arbitrary will of an arrogant Court. We *k'o-t'ou* to our parents, to our uncles, and to many friends and neighbours during the first few days of the New Year and on other solemn occasions, and we perform the same simple ceremony in front of the tablets of our deceased ancestors at least twice a year. I have heard even Europeans express pleasure at the sight of a Chinese child paying his father the reverential salute of the *k'o-t'ou*, and especially at the child's entire absence of awkwardness or self-consciousness. Perhaps the gracefulness is very much a matter of clothes; for the ungainly movements even of a badly-built man are more than half concealed beneath the undulations of the ceremonial long coat. It is not surprising that Europeans flatly refused to comply with the rules of Chinese etiquette in the matter of the *k'o-t'ou*, for the custom was in their eyes not only strange and uncivilised, but intolerably humiliating. Now that we know something of European usages, we Chinese can fully realise why it was that the practice was so strongly objected to by our Western visitors, but Europeans and Americans should also see clearly, by this time, that in expecting our foreign guests to *k'o-t'ou* in the presence of our Emperor we had no intention whatever of insulting them—not at least until acrimonious disputes had taken place and each side thought that its honour was at stake—and that we were merely asking them to carry out what was in our eyes a quite ordinary rule of etiquette.[1] It may be replied, and fairly enough,

[1] "During their whole national history the Chinese rulers and people

that the foreign ministers and their staffs should have been exempted from this rule, because they represented the sovereigns of independent states. Certainly we Chinese were punished, and deservedly punished, for the political and geographical ignorance that was at the root of our arrogant reception of the foreign representatives; but granting it to be true that the rule should have been relaxed—as indeed it had to be relaxed—in favour of the ministers, our Western guests surely went too far in contending that all Europeans, as such, should be exempted from a rule of court etiquette which had always been complied with by foreign visitors hitherto,[1] and which was carried out, not only by the greatest dignitaries in the empire, but even, on certain occasions of great solemnity, by the Emperor himself. An English poet wrote some spirited stanzas to celebrate the heroic conduct of an Englishman who, having been taken prisoner by the Chinese, suffered death rather than perform the *k'o-t'ou*. We can admire the bravery of the man without admiring the cause for which he died. Surely no ceremonial attitude of the body can be intrinsically humiliating: it is only "thinking makes it so." Of course this in itself may be said to justify the sailor's action. If a man does something which he himself sincerely believes to be dishonourable or humiliating, but which as a matter of fact happens to be entirely

had accepted this ceremony as the inseparable prerogative of the Son of Heaven. . . . The prince and his colleagues, by their discussion of the point, had aroused the resistance of the great body of *literati* and conservative officials in the empire, who had grown up in the belief that its unity and prosperity were involved in the performance of the kotow." —Williams's *Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii., pp. 670, 712 (New York, 1883). Kweiliang, a Chinese imperial commissioner, is reported to have said that "he himself would willingly burn incense before the President of the United States if asked to do so" (Williams, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 670).

[1] Including the members of the Dutch mission in the middle of the seventeeth century.

devoid of ethical significance, then that man will suffer the pains of dishonour and humiliation just as much as if his belief in the nature of the act had been a correct one. It is not to be denied, indeed, that in practice human action can rarely be altogether non-moral; though the ethical value of every act is not inherent in the act as such, but is dependent on the relation between the doer and the thing done. In Chinese eyes the *k'o-t'ou* is merely symbolical or expressive of deep respect, like the ordinary Western practice of kneeling, or the removal of the hat. Intrinsically there is nothing in taking off one's hat: one might just as well take off one's coat. In a missionary journal I find an account of a Chinese boy convert of whom the following description is given:

> I often asked him to lead in prayer, which he did most reverently. *Removing his cap* and standing with bowed head he spelled with great distinctness.[1]

Here we have a good example of how a European custom, meaningless in itself, but arbitrarily associated in Western minds with ideas of respect and reverence, is regarded as having a kind of universal sanction and as being in some obscure way pleasing to the Deity. As it happens, it is *not* a mark of respect in China to take off one's hat; indeed, if one were to pay a ceremonial visit to an acquaintance during the hat-wearing season, the removal of one's hat (even indoors) without an apology for the act would be a breach of good manners. I refer, of course, to those—whether foreigners or Chinese—who wear the Chinese national costume. Foreigners in foreign dress appropriately enough follow Western customs in such matters as the removal of the headgear,

[1] *The Chinese Recorder*, May, 1909, p. 247.

and their Chinese acquaintances are not likely to take offence at their so doing. Europeans have a proverb about doing in Rome as the Romans do, but they seem reluctant to apply the principle to their dealings with the Far East. What was really at the root of the emphatic refusal of our Western visitors to perform the *k'o-t'ou?* Our remote ancestors, we are told by biologists, used to go habitually on all-fours. Perhaps those of us who show a vain and supercilious disposition have inherited our failings from the first anthropoid ape that assumed an erect position. He, no doubt, thought he was superior to his brother apes; and probably he was so, though only because the erect posture gave him power to do things that to them were impossible. The two main objections to the *k'o-t'ou* were, firstly, that it was humiliating; secondly, that Christians knelt only to God. Perhaps it might be argued that these statements contradict each other; in any case they seem to result from confused ideas. The European goes on one knee to a king; but he will not go on both knees, because he does that only when he is addressing his God! Is kingship, then, equivalent to a moiety of Godhead?[1]

I have dwelt on this question of the *k'o-t'ou* because, so far as I know, Western writers have never succeeded in looking at the matter from the Chinese standpoint. Most of them seem to have taken it for granted that the Chinese court officials who tried to insist on the performance of this ceremony by Western visitors were making a deliberate attempt to humiliate and degrade them, whereas nothing of the kind was intended—not,

[1] As a matter of fact, the practice of kneeling at prayer is a convention of comparatively modern date. The ancient Greeks prayed standing. The Romans also stood upright, covering the head with the toga and holding the palms of their hands upward to heaven. Even the Jews—"the chosen people of God"—generally stood erect when they prayed to Jehovah.

at least, until men's minds had become embittered and Chinese pride had been harshly wounded by disastrous foreign warfare and by what the Chinese Government regarded as the extravagant pretensions of overbearing foreigners. Now that China is striving to assert her right to a place of dignity among the nations she is finding it necessary to give up many old customs—some of them harmless enough in themselves—that have hitherto contributed to emphasise her singularity. The *k'o-t'ou* is doubtless one of the ceremonies which, in State and official functions, at least, are doomed to extinction. Our Western friends, knowing this, assure us that when this peculiar custom is abolished we shall experience a healthy increase of self-respect. Why should we gain self-respect on giving up a custom that never humiliated us?

CHAPTER XV

THE SABBATH

A MATTER that demands some comment in connection with the rules and methods of the Christian missionaries in China is their insistence on the strict observance of the so-called Sabbath day. "We require all our members," says a prominent missionary, "to keep the Lord's day; not half the day, as the Roman Catholics do, but the whole day; if they have shops they must close them, and if they are at work for a master they must make an arrangement by which they can have the day off."[1] This statement of Sabbatarian policy might be made with equal truth, so far as I can ascertain, of nearly all the Protestant missions in China, though there are some missionaries, we may hope, who would have thought it hardly necessary to make a comparison between their own righteousness and the imperfections of those poor deluded half-Christians, or anti-Christians, the Roman Catholics.

It is almost pathetic to observe with what dogged persistence Protestant Christianity clings to the old Egyptian, Babylonian, and Israelitish taboo with respect to the Sabbath, as though it were really an essential part of true religion that one day out of seven should be consecrated to God and idleness. It is often urged that this supposed command of the Deity was based on the fact that a rest every seventh day is a physical necessity. This is perhaps implied in the emphasis

[1] *China's Millions*, July, 1909, p. 101.

laid on the idea of rest in the fourth Commandment itself, as given in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.[1] The twelfth verse of the twenty-third chapter contains the same injunction in different words. "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed." But immediately preceding these words are two verses which help us to perceive that some peculiar sanctity (or taboo) attached to *seven* as a number. "And six years thou shalt sow thy land and shalt gather in the fruits thereof. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still that the poor of thy people may eat, and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard."[2] It is now recognised by scholars that the Sabbath was originally nothing more than an "unlucky day"—a day on which it was supposed to be dangerous to engage in any serious employment. In China we still have many tabooed days, just as we have many days which are regarded as supremely lucky. Most of our "Sabbaths," however, vary from year to year, and are determined by experts annually in advance. One of the most recent English authorities on the Hebrew religion not only fully accepts the taboo theory of the Jewish Sabbath, but describes it as having been originally a "crass superstition."[3] Another

[1] Exod. xx., 8-11. See also Exod. xxxi., 13-17. Pascal suggested that the Sabbath was only intended to be a *sign* in memory of the escape from Egypt. "Therefore it is no longer necessary, since Egypt must be forgotten." Huxley (in *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, Eversley ed., p. 341) points out the significance of the discrepancy between the Deuteronomic version of the fourth Commandment and that which stands in Exodus.

[2] *Cf.* also Lev. xxv., 2-8.

[3] *Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra*, by W. E. Addis, M. A., pp. 86 *seq.*

recognised authority on comparative religion, Salomon Reinach, has said of the legislation and morality of the Pentateuch that it is "impregnated with taboo." "The Sabbath," he says, "was originally a taboo day, that is to say, an unlucky day; no one was to work on that day, nor to make his servant or his beast of burden work, for they would run the risk of hurting themselves or spoiling their work."[1]

Taboos always, or nearly always, have a reasonable or plausible origin, and it is quite possible that the seventh day of the week came to be tabooed just because people had discovered that a periodical rest was, on the whole and as a general rule, physically beneficial for man and beast. But if Christians wish to show that the obligation to rest on the seventh day was revealed by the Deity, they must admit that the supposed revelation to Moses was not an original revelation; for it has been clearly proved that the seventh-day rest was not peculiar to Judaism. Moreover, though the injunction to rest from labour once a week may be accepted as a rough-and-ready rule for practical guidance, it is obvious that, unless all men were exactly equal in respect of health, strength, and age, and all engaged in doing precisely similar work under precisely similar conditions, it would be impossible to lay down any universal rule as to when work ought to be laid down and when resumed. It would be absurd to suppose that all men are simultaneously reduced to a state of physical

[1] *Orpheus* (New York: Putnam), pp. 178–9; see also p. 19: "It is often said . . . that the Jews observed the Sabbath because their lawgiver, Moses, knew that man requires a day of rest. Moses, if he existed, knew nothing of the sort; he merely codified an ancient taboo, according to which one day in the week was considered unpropitious, and unfit for, useful and productive work." That the taboo was a very ancient one, and had originated in barbarous times, may be assumed from the savage penalty attached to its violation in Exod. xxxi., 14–15.

exhaustion at the end of every sixth day, and go through a sudden and simultaneous process of recuperation on the non-working day that follows. It has been found expedient in most countries—especially under the stress of modern industrial conditions—to ordain a periodical day of rest that shall apply to the whole working community. Business would be disorganised if every one took his "day off" in accordance with his real or fancied physical requirements; and one day's rest to six days' work seems to be as fair and convenient an arrangement as any other would be, with the special advantage of its vague association in Christian minds with the supposed will of God.

It is to be hoped that if Christianity ever becomes the religion of a large proportion of the people of China, the Puritan Sunday may not be a feature of Chinese life. Dr. Conybeare describes the Protestant "Sabbath" as "that hypocritical invention of Puritan ignorance" which

> is responsible for the worst and most degrading features of the English public-house and Scotch whiskey-hell. Nor are the minor taboos of the British Sunday less curious than those of any South Sea Islander. I have known persons who would listen on it to the melodies of Moody and Sankey, but not of Schumann or Schubert; would knit, but not use a sewing-machine; would play patience, but not whist; draughts, but not dominoes; bagatelle, but not billiards; who would fish, but not shoot; bicycle, but not row; row, but not play cricket or football; would devour the unedifying legends of the Jewish Patriarchs, but not read *The Times* or one of Thackeray's novels; would freely talk scandal, but not join in a political or ethical discussion.[1]

[1] F. C. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, pp. 365–6.

No, we Chinese do not ask to be endowed with the privileges and responsibilities of the British Sabbath.

The most curious point about the Christian day of rest which Protestants, and especially evangelical missionaries, are so fond of describing as the "Lord's day" and the "Sabbath," is that the day in question has no special right to either of those names. The Jewish Sabbath, as every one knows, was Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and it was regarded as the Lord's day because on that day he rested after his construction of the material universe. Why holiness came to be attached to the conception of resting rather than of working is a question that seems to require some elucidation. Whatever the explanation of this point may be, it was not till after Christianity had become definitely estranged from Judaism that the first day in the week took the place of the seventh as the holy-day for Christians.[1] It is a curious example of the inconsistency of the average Christian, or rather of the uninquiring docility with

[1] "Old Greek and Latin writers equally testify to the widespread observance of the Sabbath, especially in ancient Rome. There was nothing distinctively Christian in it. On the contrary, the Christians, in order to spite the Jews, very soon began to violate the Sabbath; and in time substituted their Sunday for it as the day for holding the *synaxis* or *ecclesia* (church or assembly), at which the Jewish, and later on the Christian, Scriptures were read, and prayer and praise offered. Efforts were made in the Church sporadically, from the fourth century on, to suspend work on Sundays, but these never succeeded; and in Southern Europe there is no day of the week on which man and brute are harder tasked. Had the leaders of early Christian opinion been inspired by feelings of humanity, and not by mere theological hatred, they would have encouraged instead of discouraged the Jewish day of rest. They destroyed the thing, though they could not destroy the name. At the beginning of the twentieth century the popular Governments of France and Italy, which both equally lie under the ban of the Church, are seeking to enforce by legislation a day of rest for man and beast. But for the cantankerous opposition of the Church, the result aimed at in such legislation might have been secured eighteen centuries ago."—Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, pp. 157–8.

which he dutifully accepts and thinks he believes the theological notions and precepts upon which he has been brought up from childhood, that though he is incessantly imploring God to have mercy upon him and incline his heart to keep this law—the fourth Commandment—he never dreams of even attempting to carry out its specific injunction. His confusion of Saturday and Sunday is surely inexcusable, for the Commandment emphatically states that the day to be kept holy is the seventh day of the week, and that its holiness consists in the fact that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it." The early Christians, in order to differentiate themselves from the Jews, abolished the Jewish Sabbath among themselves, but were obliged to retain the fourth Commandment because it was enshrined in the Old Testament. It is supposed that Sunday was chosen as the Christian holy-day in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, which was believed to have taken place on that day.[1] Thus the observance of Sunday as a day of rest and piety is derived, not from any ancient quasi-divine commandment, but from a regulation made in their own initiative by the early Christians, who, so far from respecting the real Sabbath, actually abolished it.

But even if Christendom had agreed to suppress its hatred of the Jews to the extent of consenting to join them in keeping holy the true Sabbath, it is difficult to see how twentieth-century Christians could accept the injunctions and doctrinal statements of the fourth Commandment without some mental bewilderment. We are entitled, surely, to assume that even bibliolaters and

[1] See, for example, Dr. Rudolf Schmid's *The Scientific Creed of a Theologian* (Eng. trans., London, 1906), p. 243.

the most conservative of theologians have totally surrendered the old belief that the world was created in six natural days. The non-Christian, reading the Bible without any preconceived theory of its infallibility, is disposed to think that when the writer of Genesis spoke of seven days (six days of creation and one day of rest) he either meant exactly what he said—in which case, as a matter of scientific fact, he happened to be wrong—or was merely giving literary expression to an old-world myth which he never intended any one to regard as a divine revelation of truth. The orthodox Christian, reading the Bible with the firm conviction that it is the infallible Word of God, provides himself and his fellow-Christians with the explanation that the six days of creation meant six indefinitely-long periods.[1] What then becomes of the seventh day? The account given in Genesis of the proceedings of each working "day" closes with a reference to "the evening and the morning," but no such remark is made in connection with the seventh "day." This has given rise to the ingenious hypothesis that the "day" in question has not yet come to an end. The six ages of creation, in other words, were followed by a seventh age in which we are now living. It must surely follow, if we accept this theory, that, so far as humanity is concerned, the Sabbath-day is always with us; to-morrow never comes[2]; the present "day" has been consecrated to repose by Divine fiat, and men must either cease to work or wilfully defy their Maker.

[1] Though since the explosion of the bombshell thrown by *Essays and Reviews* this explanation is no longer regarded with complacence except by a small number of country parsons and a very large number of missionaries.

[2] "'Yes, that 's it,' said the Hatter, with a sigh; 'it 's always tea-time, and we 've no time to wash the things between whiles.'"—*Alice in Wonderland.*

It is fairly safe to assume that the majority of Christian missionaries in China rarely have occasion to discuss with their converts the historical and theological problems connected with the Christian Sunday. In any case, they would doubtless hold that in the long run their converts would derive such immense material and spiritual benefit from a rigid observance of the Lord's day as would amply compensate them for any initial inconvenience. Yet it is questionable whether even from their own point of view the missionaries are wise in insisting on a rule which, after all, is surely of very minor importance. On a river in the province of Hunan my boatman told me that in his town (I think it was Hsiang-t'an) there were several English and American missionaries who had made some converts among men of his own class. I asked him why he also did not become a Christian. "My family is too large," he said. "The foreigners say we must do no work every seventh day. I cannot afford that. I only make just enough to support my family as it is." If this man had made the same remark to the missionaries as he made to me, they would doubtless have replied, in accordance with the common practice, that he need anticipate no lack of material prosperity as a result of Sunday observance, or at any rate that he would be richly repaid later on for temporary losses; and that, as regards any pressing material wants, "the Lord assuredly would provide." Unfortunately, it is sometimes the case that the Lord does not provide. When this happens, the missionary will say, "Your faith is too weak," or "The Lord is punishing you for your past sins," or "The Lord is trying you as he tried Job." These remarks may, or may not, satisfy the convert. If they do not, he will probably relapse into heathendom, and regard foreigners with an unfavourable eye from that day forward. When

a missionary feels inclined to comfort a distressed convert with the assurance that "The Lord will help," "The Lord will provide," he should be careful to add that the Lord may *not* help, and may *not* provide; otherwise it will perhaps happen that considerable ill-feeling against the Western faith will arise among ignorant people who, having in their heart of hearts believed missionaries to be a class of potent magicians and Christianity a superior kind of witchcraft, are driven at last to the disconcerting conclusion that the Christian Deity shows just as much unaccountable partiality in his allotment of good and evil fortune, and just as many whimsical prejudices in dealing with the humble petitions of his devotees, as the despised and discredited divinity whose battered image with its broken nose stands amid shattered roof-tiles and the cold ashes of incense-sticks in the neighbouring Taoist temple. Before rashly promising a Chinese convert that God will always come to his help or answer his prayers, the missionary should never forget that he is not addressing one of his own Christian-bred countrymen, who will know how to make allowances for pious hyperbole, but that he is making a most serious statement which in all probability will be taken *au pied de la lettre* by his Chinese listener. There is no doubt that many Chinese have become Christians owing to what can hardly be described otherwise than as a misunderstanding. They are assured that after the reception of the gospel they will experience great peace and happiness, and they are also assured, on the strength of Christ's own words, that they may quite safely count on receiving divine answers to their prayers. They are, as a rule, extremely superstitious, highly credulous of the mysterious and uncanny powers supposed to be wielded by Western foreigners, and they do not realise (how can they?) that the happiness prom-

ised them may be only spiritual, perhaps tempered by great material misery, and that the answers to their prayers may take a highly disagreeable form.

Many an Englishman who is "down on his luck" and is told by a sympathetic friend that God will watch over him and bring him release from his woes regards the remark as nothing more than a neighbourly attempt at consolation, and attributes no more serious importance to it than if his friend had said it was raining hard to-day and would perhaps be fine to-morrow. The Chinese Christian does not dismiss such a remark so lightly; he supposes it to be oracular, and he looks for its fulfilment. If, after long waiting, he finds that no fulfilment comes, it is not improbable that he will pay a stealthy visit to the old temple with the broken roof, and cause whiffs of scented smoke once more to curl upward toward the broken nose of the battered Taoist image.

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGION, MAGIC, AND WORD-SPELLS

IT has been mentioned that there are Chinese who regard missionaries as magicians and Christianity as a kind of witchcraft. In my observations on missionary methods I have tried to base my criticisms as far as possible on the acknowledged writings of the missionaries themselves, and if in a matter of this kind their published reports are somewhat lacking in evidence it should be remembered that they are naturally unwilling to represent their converts or inquirers as holding any but lofty and dignified conceptions of the Christian faith. In spite of this fact, a perusal even of the most recent missionary journals will enable us to perceive not only that non-Christian Chinese regard Christianity with a curious mixture of fear and superstitious respect, but that there are converts who in adopting Christianity have done so under the vague impression that the foreign "magic" is more potent than the native. One party of native evangelists entered a village in which "they found the people in awful poverty. They could not buy books [that is to say, they could not afford the Christian literature offered for sale], so the young men gave Gospels and tracts to those who would accept them. After a short time the people brought the books back; *they had not dared to open them for fear of some subtle drug between the pages that*

would bewitch them."[1] A native evangelist met a coolie on the road and asked him "if he had ever heard of Jesus, and if he would accept a Gospel and tract. The coolie was so frightened that he dropped his load and ran, while his poor wife sat down by the load and cried."[2] Another missionary, describing the effect of certain revival meetings, writes thus:

In one place in Manchuria the power of God was so terrible amongst the people that the *heathen* said to one another: "Their Spirit has come! Their Spirit has come!" Elsewhere, the Chinese say: "The missionaries are first-rate devils, and the Chinese who believe their doctrines are second-rate devils." But in Manchuria they say: "Their Spirit has come!"[3]

Yet another missionary, describing his travels in the province of Chehkiang, writes thus:

In one village we were entertained by an old Christian woman. On approaching her house the first thing that one noticed was a board above the window with four characters *I-K'ao Zông-ti* ("Trust in God") painted on it; and above the door, just where the heathen stick up a Taoist charm to ward off evil influences, there was a strip of red paper with the characters *Yi-mo-nen-li* ("Emmanuel") written on it.[4]

Does not this look as though the old Christian woman had simply exchanged one form of superstition for another? It would be interesting to ascertain what—if any—definite ideas were associated in her mind with the word Emmanuel.[5] Needless to say, I have no

[1] *China's Millions*, March, 1910, p. 41. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, July, 1909, p. 111. [4] *Ibid.*, April, 1909, p. 55.

[5] The woman had presumably read Matt. i., 23; but had her instructors taken care to tell her what modern critics have to say about Isa. vii., 14? If not, why did they allow her to labour under a misapprehension?

means of knowing what the particular Taoist charm was that had given place to the Christian scroll, but if it resembled the great majority of Taoist charms—such as those constantly issued in large numbers by the "Heavenly Master" of Taoism and sold to the Taoist faithful like papal indulgences—it probably consisted of one or two meaningless "characters" the fearful and wonderful shape of which was supposed to cause the immediate withdrawal of uncanny influences and noxious demons. Buddhist charms are in some localities even more popular than Taoist ones. There lies before me at the present moment a charm which is supposed to represent the mystic syllable OM which of recent years has become more or less familiar to Western dabblers in certain phases of "New Thought" and "Occultism." The scroll now before me contains, in addition to a drawing of the charm itself, a Chinese inscription which I may translate thus:

I-ching [this is the name of a famous Buddhist pilgrim who travelled from China to the Buddhist Holy Land in the seventh century of the Christian era] discovered in India this singular word OM. Wherever this word is displayed or spoken all devils and spirits who hear or see it will be struck with panic.

It is safe to say that the Christian woman of Chehkiang did not tear down her heathen charms without having first reasoned herself into the belief that the mysterious phrase *Yi-mo-nen-li* would be no less efficacious than they had been in protecting her from the machinations of the rascally demons that were wont to infest her neighbourhood. To admit this is by no means necessarily to conclude that the woman was not, in her way, a sincere Christian. In attributing a mysterious

efficacy to a word or a name she was merely giving expression to a superstition which has probably appeared in connection with every religious system that the world has seen and is certainly not extinct even in Western Christendom to-day.[1]

There seems to be some ineradicable tendency in the human mind, at all times and among all races, to clothe certain sounds or syllables, uttered or written under conditions of ceremonial solemnity, with deep mystic meaning or spiritual potency.[2] The wizard-spells of fairyland, as every child knows, were meaningless rigmaroles which had efficacy only if they were pronounced with absolute correctness and with the appropriate ceremonies. The magic door would remain immovably closed to all but the enchanter who remembered his "Open Sesame." Sometimes the mystic word is the hidden name of a god, the theory being that in the god's secret name resides his soul, or a portion of his divinity, and that the man who, by magical or other means, has acquired knowledge of the name is thereby in a position

[1] This does not necessarily imply that magic is identical with primitive religion. That the two had a common origin is a somewhat prevalent view, but it is quite a tenable hypothesis that they arose independently and proceeded on different lines, which, however, occasionally crossed each other. (See J. H. Leuba's article in *The Sociological Review*, Jan., 1909.) On the other hand, the belief that "magic and religion are only diversified forms of myth, which is science in formation" is held by more than one competent authority. (See V. Henry's *La Magie dans l'Inde* [Paris, 1909]. The quotation is from a review in *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, p. 496.) The question of the connection between magic and religion has also been dealt with by Wundt, Mauss, and Hubert. (See article by F. B. Jevons in *The Sociological Review*, April, 1908.)

[2] "Speaking the right words, and pronouncing the right name constituted, together with the correct ceremony and the bringing of the right sacrifice, the conditions upon which depends the success of the priest in the incarnation ritual."—Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 292.

to guide or control the divine will.[1] Even cities seem to have had their hidden names, known only to the initiated. Rome itself is said to have possessed a sacred name which has not been discovered to this day. The people of many races existing at the present time —including the Chinese—have in addition to their ordinary names private ones which are used only by their nearest relatives.[2] "The modern logical view of names," says Dr. Farnell,[3] "as merely indifferent speech-symbols which can be changed without affecting the essence of the things, was by no means the old-world view. The formula *nomina sunt numina* was valid in all the old religions of the Mediterranean area, including earlier and even later Christianity: the divine name was felt to be part of the divine essence and itself of supernatural potency." In a later passage this well-informed anthropologist remarks that

in an early metaphysical theory of the origin of things, which in its harmonious self-contradiction reaches quite to the level of Hegelian philosophy, the universe is said to have come into being, and the first god himself effects his own creation by the utterance of his own portentous name: in the beginning was the name. . . . And these facts of old-world religion and religious logic cast a new

[1] A well-known example of this is to be found in the prayers to Osiris recorded in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead.* The dead man is supposed to begin by addressing Osiris thus: "I know thee, and I know thy name, and I know the names of the forty-two gods," etc.

[2] "The Indians of British Columbia have a great horror of telling their names. Among the Algonquins a person's real name is communicated only to his nearest relations and dearest friends; the outer world addresses him by a kind of nickname."—Lord Avebury, *Peace and Happiness*, p. 220. See also Skeat's *Malay Magic*, p. 341 (Macmillan, 1900); and (more especially) Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. i., pp. 403-447.

[3] *The Evolution of Religion*, p. 32 (Williams & Norgate, 1905).

light on the name-formulæ which close most of the prayers of the Christian Church, and which are words of power to speed the prayer home; and though the modern consciousness may often be unaware of this mystic function of theirs, we may believe that it was more clearly recognised in the early days of Christianity, for in the Apocryphal Acts of St. John we find a long list of mythical names and titles attached to Christ giving to the prayer much of the tone of an enchantment. . . . Even the Jewish service, which we still use on Ash Wednesday, employs curse-formulæ in which there is no immediate reference to God, and they may have been regarded originally as having an independent efficacy.[1]

It is clear, then, that Western critics should move into less fragile houses than they at present occupy before they begin to throw stones at Chinese Buddhists for their repetition of meaningless names and words (often transliterated from Sanskrit) or to denounce the Taoists for their contemptible belief in written spells and exorcisms. As already indicated, there is some reason to believe that there are people in the Western hemisphere to-day who, not content with the charms and incantations provided by their own many-sided religious system, are by no means unwilling to borrow from the word-magic of the East. A book which is representative of a rapidly-increasing section of modern Western literature contains the following enlightening description of a process that is to lead to mental tranquillity:

You may fix the mind upon the tip of the nose or upon the tongue, and so experience a sort of absorption in the particular enjoyment upon which you happen to be meditating. Again, you may fix the attention upon the heart, and imagine that you see a lotus-like form. . . . This

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 188, 190, 197.

you may think of as turning towards you, as you breathe gently and rhythmically, whilst you repeat the sacred word OM. Such a practice as this will have a very tranquillising effect upon you.[1]

The remarkable properties of the word OM in connection with the exorcising of devils were, as we have seen, fully realised thirteen hundred years ago by the Chinese pilgrim I-ching, and Oriental pride should undoubtedly be gratified by this unexpected proof that the potency of the charm is recognised in the most progressive of Christian lands to-day.

Setting aside all consideration of the numerous words and phrases that have been definitely consecrated to magical or quasi-magical uses, we find innumerable proofs that successful sacerdotalism has always derived no small part of its influence over men's minds from its skilful manipulation of spoken and written language. Priestcraft, ever ready to make capital, not only out of the weaknesses of man's moral nature, but also out of his psychological eccentricities, has always encouraged the popular tendency to regard words as something more than arbitrary symbols of ideas. The Church of Rome was not the first, nor was it the last, religious organisation that deliberately set itself to hypnotise men's minds with subtly-woven words, though no other has done it with the same extraordinary skill. It was not a mere sluggish conservation that impelled the priests of the Middle Ages to retain the use of the Latin language

[1] *The New Thought Manual*, by R. D. Stocker, No. 1, 1906, p. 112. It seems doubtful whether Mr. Stocker's interpretation of the uses and qualities of the word OM would meet with the approval of the priests and lawgivers of Vedic India. For their own views on the subject see "The Laws of Manu," ii., 74-76, 83, 84; vi., 70; xi., 249, 266 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.). Its chief claim to reverence seems to have consisted in the fact that it was supposed to bring about ceremonial purity.

for liturgical purposes in countries where Latin had ceased to be a spoken tongue. To this day we find that the Christian worshipper—though he be a Protestant—in whom scarcely any emotional response is awakened even by the excellent English version of the fine hymn "That day of wrath, that dreadful day"[1] may yet be profoundly stirred by the solemn chanting of the *Dies Irae* in the original Latin. When that great and brave man Sir Walter Scott lay dying, it was not on the English hymns of his Protestant childhood that his mind dwelt most lovingly, but on some of the sombre chants and litanies of the Roman ritual in which, as his biographer tells us, he had always taken delight.[2] One of his favourites was the sonorous

"Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrymosa
Dum pendebat Filius."[3]

During my boyhood in England a young schoolfellow of mine was intensely fascinated by the romantic aspects of medievalism, and more especially by the high-sounding terminology of heraldry and ecclesiasticism. He filled a large exercise-book with a pencilled novel of which the title was *The Knight of Ravenglass; or, The Monk of Blackcomb.* The knight and the monk were, I remember, one and the same person acting in two different capacities, though I have no recollection of the circumstances which rendered this peculiar arrangement possible. Battles and tournaments and knightly escapades were introduced chiefly in order to give the juvenile author a chance to talk mysteriously of gules, vair and sable, cinquefoils, escallops and an-

[1] *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 206.
[2] See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. x., pp. 210 *seq.*
[3] *Cf. Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 117.

nulets, honourable ordinaries, saltires and chevrons, wyverns and griffins, and all the pomp and circumstance of chivalry. (What a poor thing heraldry would be if all its splendid jargon were reduced to homely English!) Castles were described to provide an excuse for the existence of moats and barbicans, turrets and donjon-keeps. Gloomy monasteries reared their frowning walls so that the reader might hear whispered secrets of refectory and chapter-house, cells and cloisters, subpriors and almoners, begging friars and Augustinian canons-regular, and hooded Dominicans. Monks stalked solemnly across the author's pages in order that they might have opportunities of greeting each other with a *Pax vobiscum*, a *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*, or a *Laus Deo*. Had my young friend been obliged to modernise all his technical terms and omit or curtail his ecclesiastical phraseology, he would have thrown his novel aside in disgust: it was the words themselves that threw their weird enchantment over him, even more effectually than the things that the words represented.

"The wizardry of theologian and magician," says a recent writer, "has lost its spell, its power has gone; men have awakened to the fact that the doctrines of the one and the incantations of the other are in themselves only words, both equally harmless, both equally without any semblance of magical power."[1] The wizardry of words has not yet, indeed, ceased to cast spells over the minds of men, nor would it do so even if all forms of theology were to become totally extinct; for there would still be left the poets and orators and prose artists and other word-magicians whose power over the nobler emotions of mankind will never, it is to be hoped, pass away. But in addition to the loftier forms of word-

[1] The Rev. B. A. Millard, in *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1907, p. 630.

magic[1] (not here under discussion) which have given us not only the best secular literature but also the imperishable liturgical and scriptural poetry of Christianity and some other religious systems, there is also an immeasurably inferior magic that consists of little more than the verbal mannerisms of ecclesiasticism. This, one need not regret to observe, is fast losing its once powerful influence over cultured minds. All the more necessary is it that the Christian missionaries, who are not always among the wisest or most cultured of their race and age, should be restrained from attempting to re-enslave the Chinese intellect—now trying hard to set itself free from native superstitions—by means of antiquated spells drawn from the dusty lumber-rooms of Western priestcraft. The Protestant missionary in China affects to ridicule the practice of the Romanists for their ceremonial use of a dead language, not realising that, by his own ritualistic repetitions, his retention of a religious vocabulary, and his adherence to archaic words and crude and repulsive metaphors in his hymns and prayers, he is making use of methods that do not essentially differ from those of the Romanists.[2] He gives us the Christian Bible in mediocre Chinese: yet, what is it but a slavish adoration of mere sounds—a belief in the spiritual efficacy of words as such—that

[1] "All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word."

[2] "Word-worship is the perpetual bane of the book-learned, who, like other men, become assimilated to what they work in, and end by putting the symbols in the place of the things symbolised. Missionaries seem to suffer from two forms of this disease of the learned. One is exhibited in an array of phrases transferred from archaic Hebrew and Aramaic Greek to archaic, but very beautiful, English, which are in early youth committed blindly to memory, and in adult life worshipped, the little idols being kept neatly ranged in rows in little cerebral shrines, dusted and always ready to be brought out. The other form is the worship of words in general."—Alexander Michie, *Missionaries in China* (Tientsin, 1893). See also Sturt's *Idea of a Free Church*, pp. 267-9.

impels him to give us uncouth transliterations of such names as Jehovah-Jireh (*Ye-ho-wa I-la* in Pekingese), Matthew (*Ma-t'ai*), and Ebenezer (*I-pien-i-sè-erh*)? It may be urged that the very nature of the Chinese language makes it impossible to adopt any other system, but this excuse is quite inadequate, for the names might at least be abbreviated, or they might be boldly exchanged for names that are not repugnant to the genius of the Chinese language. Praiseworthy attempts have recently been made, indeed, to invent a new abbreviated system of transliteration, which would give the Bible a less barbarous appearance to Chinese eyes and also make it more pleasing to the Chinese ears; but the mere suggestion of compromise seems to be shocking to the minds of the more rigid type of evangelical missionary.[1] The present system of transliterating scriptural names in full, quite regardless of whether the Chinese characters selected are suitable or unsuitable for use as personal names, reminds an educated Chinese who dips into a Chinese version of the Bible for the first time of the cumbersome and uncouth transliterations of Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Turki sounds which are to be found scattered throughout Chinese Buddhistic and topographical works. The missionary's desire to preserve the original sounds of biblical names while giving them a Chinese dress is not a peculiarly European foible. The Chinese Buddhist monk, when translating his Sanskrit texts, similarly regarded the Buddhistic nomenclature as having a quasi-magical value, and as too sacred to be unnecessarily tampered with, and his more or less faithful transliterations are, from the modern

[1] For some of the recent suggestions that have been made by missionaries on this matter, see *The Chinese Recorder*, April, 1909, pp. 220-1; June, 1909, pp. 345 *seq.*; and July, 1909, pp. 408-9.

reader's point of view, one of the most disagreeable features of that class of Chinese literature.[1]

Many missionaries, it is clear, are still in the grip of the superstitious notion that biblical names possess some inherent sanctity, and that to replace them by names less objectionable to Chinese ears, but more remote from the original sounds, would be to commit an act of unpardonable sacrilege. An indication that biblical or saints' names have a magical quality—or, if the term be preferred, a sacred quality—peculiar to themselves is afforded by the exceedingly common practice of saddling Chinese converts with names taken either from the Scriptures or from the saints' calendar. The same practice, indeed, is common enough in Europe and America, and was especially so during the early days of Puritanism,[2] but in the West the names have at least become naturalised, whereas they have not, and cannot (owing to the peculiarities of the Chinese language), become naturalised in China. The ordinary Chinese surnames are, of course, retained; thus among converts to Christianity we constantly meet persons who describe themselves somewhat ridiculously as Jacob Wang, Matthew Li, Joseph Ku, Peter Hsü, or Mark Chang. Is it thought that the convert Wang Shou-li cannot be a faithful Christian unless he

[1] The whole question of how best to render foreign names in Chinese books is one that ought to be thoroughly considered by a committee of competent native scholars; for the continual increase in the mass of Western literature that is now being rendered into Chinese makes the matter one of serious linguistic importance.

[2] "Will not posterity say that our modern reformation has been wonderfully delicate and exact, in having not only combated errors and vices, and filled the world with devotion, humility, obedience, peace, and all sorts of virtue; but in having proceeded so far as to quarrel with our ancient baptismal names of Charles, Louis, Francis, to fill the world with Methusalehs, Ezekiels, and Malachis, names of a more spiritual sound?" —Montaigne's *Essays*: "Of Names."

changes his name to Jacob Wang? Is it supposed that "heathen" names have been so saturated with diabolical influences that they are proof against the cleansing and sanctifying qualities of the waters of Christian baptism? In many cases the selection of names seems to be based on a belief that the holy attributes of the biblical prophets and apostles and the virtues of the medieval saints imparted a permanent aroma of sanctity to their personal names, and that the converts who are fortunate enough to receive such names in baptism will be partakers in this blessedness. Thus a young Tibetan lama mentioned by the Abbé Huc received on conversion to Christianity the significant name of Paul, and a young Chinese Catholic of my acquaintance rejoices in the name of the famous missionary Francis Xavier.

A proof that the early Christians attributed miraculous powers to the mere name of Jesus, regarded as a thing separable from Jesus himself, may be found in that passage of the New Testament where we are told that a certain person, though no disciple of Jesus, was nevertheless successful in casting out devils *in his name.*[1] The devils, it is clear, were obliged to obey the miracle-worker because, though not himself a follower of the Nazarene, he had made himself master of an irresistible Christian spell: the spoken name of Jesus. Superstitions of this kind, we see, take an unconscionable time in dying. Do not Christian priests still claim the power to perform miracles on ceremonial occasions *in the name of* Christ or the Holy Trinity? Do not ordinary Christian laymen exercise a similar power when they ask the Deity *in the name of* Christ to grant their prayers? And have we not seen that the poor

[1] Luke ix., 49. It has been suggested that the man was an Essene. If we assume the accuracy of the Gospel account, we may gather from verse 50 that Jesus did not regard the man as a hostile rival.

Chinese peasant woman, after her conversion to Christianity, exorcises devils by displaying a name-charm obtained from the Old Testament?

It cannot be denied that this reverence for holy names as such, this universal word-worship, must have struck deep roots into human nature, for we find it flourishing in all ages and among all peoples, and associated with every form of religion.[1] The Chinese pilgrim toiling up a rugged mountain-path to some famous cloud-girt shrine murmurs unwearyingly the sacred name of Amitabha; the Tibetan, twirling his prayer-wheel as he goes, drones in a deep monotone the spell of the jewelled lotus; the disciple of Islam, making his pilgrimage to holy Mecca, bows reverently while he utters the name of the One God whose prophet is Mohammed; the pious Catholic on bended knee tells his beads and mutters the potent name of the Virgin Mother of God; the Salvationist clashes his loud cymbals to accompany the shouts in which he expresses his jubilant affection for a celestial General Booth. It is a jangled music of prayer, spell, and invocation that rises day by day from the lips and hearts of men to the throne of the Unknown God. It includes the *Omito Fo* of the Chinese, the *Om mane padme hum* of the Tibetan, the *Great is Allah* of the Mohammedan, the *Ave Maria* of the Catholic, the *Glory Alleluia* of the corybantic Salvationist, and the *Yi-mo-nen-li* and *Ye-ho-wa* of the Chinese Christian. Who will dare assert from his own knowledge that these varied cries, which sound so discordant on earth, do not, each and all,

[1] "The sound-image of a sacred name at which 'every knee shall bow,' or even of one which may be formed in the mind but may not be uttered by the lips, has more power at the moment of intensest feeling than the realisation of its meaning."—Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics*, p. 71 (Constable, 1908).

cause the harp-strings of the angels to vibrate and thrill with the grandest of blended harmonies? As to that, alas! we have nothing to say. We can only gaze longingly starward, and wonder why it is that the ears of man are deaf to the music of the spheres; or longingly earthward, and marvel at the unplumbed depths of the ocean of human ignorance. It may be that the angels' fingers are nothing but cosmic laws playing upon the vibrating ether; it may be, after all, that the Unknown God is deaf and blind.

CHAPTER XVII

CHURCHES, CHURCH-BELLS, AND HYMNS

WE Chinese who have been so often derided for our unreasoning conservatism are sometimes tempted to believe that Western peoples are just as blindly prejudiced as ourselves in favour of their own social and religious customs and usages, and hardly more competent than we are to differentiate between the essential and the merely accidental attributes of a high civilisation. This being so, we are hardly surprised to find that when engaged in introducing their religious system into a heathen land like China, Europeans are not content with importing the simple teachings attributed to the Jewish carpenter whom they believe to have been God, nor even with offering us that extraordinary system of dogmatic theology with which the ingenuity of numberless ecclesiastical brains has endowed the Western world. In addition to this, they consider it their duty to press upon our acceptance those outward and visible but certainly unessential forms and modes of religious expression which in the course of many centuries have grown up on Western soil, and have survived through the ages by constantly adapting themselves (more or less successfully) to the ever-changing religious needs of Western peoples. Certain types of architecture, music, hymnology, prayer-formularies, liturgical services, schemes of salvation, and confessions of faith are regarded, seemingly, as so

closely interwoven with the teachings of the great opponent of Pharisaism that to modify them in any important particular as a concession to the alien taste and culture of an Eastern race would be like tampering with the very sources of divine truth. An observant Chinese who has spent some years in the West comes to realise something, no doubt, of the tender and holy associations that cluster round the glorious cathedral-towers and parish churches of Europe; and if he happens to possess a good ear he will learn to appreciate the exquisite beauty of much of the music that he hears in those sacred buildings, even if it fail to awaken within him a strong religious as distinct from an emotional and æsthetic response. But the more he is able to admire these and other forms of religious expression in their European environment, the less inclined will he be to sympathise with the efforts of those who wish to transfer them to the soil of China.

We have already considered some of the characteristics of Western Christianity that meet with no emotional or intellectual response from the vast bulk of the Chinese people. Let us turn our attention to a few more of these. It is probably beyond any man's power to estimate the vastness of the inimical forces set in motion against the Christian propaganda merely by the scandals that have occurred over the acquisition of sites for mission-buildings (the buildings when they are erected being generally of an offensively foreign style of architecture) and the construction of churches.[1] These things form an exceedingly ugly blot on the fair fame of Christendom. Great buildings like the cathedral in Canton stand as ever-conspicuous monuments to the religious bigotry, the political arrogance, and the

[1] *Cf.* Alexander Michie's *Missionaries in China*, pp. 17-18 (Tientsin, 1893).

contempt for popular sentiment shown by the Christian nations of the West in their dealings with the people of China. The Mohammedans, recognising and making allowances for certain Chinese prejudices and superstitions, have always, in China, built their mosques without minarets. Is it impossible for good Catholics to worship their God except in a building that has windows of a peculiar shape and possesses a lofty steeple? The European, perhaps, believes or hopes that the sky-pointing spire will serve as a kind of silent street-missionary, pointing out to the heathen who is groping in darkness the way by which he may reach heaven. The groping heathen, however, is more likely to regard it as a permanent record of his country's political disgrace and of the shameless aggressiveness of militant Christianity. The Chinese, like the Hindu, smiles when he hears his Western teachers extolling the virtues of meekness and humility. "I was teaching the Sermon on the Mount," writes a missionary in India, "to a Hindu student and friend. When we came to the words 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,' he said to me; 'Sir, the Englishman may inherit the earth, but if you call him "meek" he would be insulted.' '[1] Indeed, it hardly admits of dispute that of all Anglo-Saxon characteristics, the one that has most vividly impressed the minds of both Hindu and Chinese is the absence of the much-vaunted Christian virtue of meekness. Not unnaturally, perhaps, this makes "the heathen in his blindness" wonder whether Christianity really possesses the character-transforming power that is ascribed to it by his missionary-teachers.[2]

[1] *The East and the West*, Jan., 1910, p. 83.

[2] "Indifference to the opinions of others and disrespect for their institutions are somewhat characteristic of the race from which Protestant missionaries mostly come. The English-speaking peoples are every-

A missionary once told me that he hoped, when the state of the mission funds permitted, to equip his little church with a steeple and a bell. I hazarded the suggestion that so long as an overwhelming majority of the people of his neighbourhood were non-Christians and not always animated by the friendliest of feelings toward foreigners, the sound of a Christian bell might possibly do the cause of Christianity more harm than good. Church-bells have not yet become a common feature of Christian worship in China, and if missionaries are wise they will not be parties to their introduction. Apart from the irritating effect which the sound might have on heathen nerves, it is obvious that the tinkle and jangle of Western bells would inevitably challenge comparison with the deep boom of the sweet-toned gongs of the Buddhist monasteries, and the result of the comparison would not be soothing to Christian pride. That Christians would explain the native preference for the

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where masterful and unaccommodating, representatives of force in its various phases, physical, nervous, and moral. They are often feared, sometimes respected—at a distance. They make good laws and enforce them, but do not often gain as they deserve the love of inferior, or any other races. Constitutionally, they seem to be incompetent for anything but a commanding *rôle;* hence they are scarcely the ideal stuff of which to make missionaries—to races which inherit adult civilisations. (With undeveloped races the case is, of course, wholly different.) Through the transparent robes of their humility may generally be traced the imperious spirit, impatient of opposition and delay. Missionaries often try, sincerely enough, to live down their people; but to wear the clothes of the poor and eat their food may be nearer to formal condescension than to true sympathy. The thing needful, the entering freely into the spirit of the people, is of exceedingly rare attainment. Missionaries talk much, and very naturally, of the good things they offer to the Chinese, and the sacrifices they make for them. But gratitude is not awakened in that way, much less love. Natives instinctively fear foreigners, *et dona ferentes*, and the more the gifts are pressed on their attention the more suspicious they naturally become."—Alexander Michie's *Missionaries in China*, p. 24 (Tientsin, 1893).

Buddhist gong on the ground of Chinese prejudice and conservatism is more than likely. A Western student of Oriental religious usages thus writes of certain features of Buddhism in Japan:

> The great tongueless bell is another striking accessory to the temple services. . . . Whereas the general associations of the Christian spire and belfry, apart from the note of time, are those of joy, invitation and good news, those of the tongueless and log-struck bells of Buddhism are sombre and saddening. . . . The one music, high in air, seems ever to tell of faith, triumph, and aspiration; the other in minor notes, from bells hung low on yokes, perpetually echoes the pessimism of despair, the folly of living, and the joy that anticipates its end.[1]

This idea is a suggestive one and is well expressed; but the "pessimism" of Buddhism, we should remember, has been worked by Christian writers for rather more than it is worth. Certainly the philosophical pessimism of Buddhism has never succeeded in turning Buddhists into practical pessimists. The three peoples of Asia by whom Buddhism was most willingly accepted—Burma, Siam, and Japan—are probably the happiest and most cheerful peoples on the face of the earth, or were so until the coming of the men from the West added a certain grimness to their lives. I have at my side another book, written by an Englishman who has shown a rare capacity not only for sympathising with Eastern ideas, but also for expressing his sympathy through the medium of simple and telling language. In the following passage, however, he is narrating his personal experiences irrespective of Oriental preferences:

> I can remember as a boy [he says] how I disliked to hear the church bells ringing for service. I hated them.

[1] W. E. Griffis in *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), pp. 307-8.

They made me shudder. . . . And now I know that I disliked the bells then, as I dislike them now, because of all sounds that of bells is to me the harshest and noisiest. . . . Very few are in tune, none are sweet-toned, all are rung far louder and faster than they should be, so that their notes, which might be bearable, become a wrangling abomination. But I love the monastery gongs in Burma because they are delicately tuned, and they are rung softly and with such proper intervals between each note that there is no jar, none of that hideous conflict of the dying vibrations with the new note that is maddening to the brain. . . . I shall never remember the call to Christian prayer without a shudder of dislike, a putting of my fingers in my ears. I shall never recall the Buddhist gongs ringing down the evening air across the misty river without there arising within me some of that beauty, that gentleness and harmony to which they seem such a perfect echo.[1]

And what if it be true, as the writer on Japanese Buddhism told us, that the Buddhist gongs are sombre and saddening? Perhaps it is chiefly because they are saddening that they are so beautiful and sweet. Has not one of your own Western poets told you that "the sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought"?

One of the most depressing examples of the way in which well-meaning persons try to fill Chinese bottles with the wine of Western piety may be found in that important branch of the Protestant missionary's labours which consists in teaching converts to sing hymns. The hymns are sung to Western tunes, though it must be admitted that Western ears might fail sometimes to recognise that such was the case. The carved noises of

[1] Fielding Hall's *The Hearts of Men* (2nd ed.), pp. 305-7. Perhaps an exception might be made in favour of some of the great cathedral and college bells of Europe. Has Mr. Fielding Hall ever stood in the cloisters of the most beautiful of Oxford colleges, on an autumn evening, at a time when the bells of the great tower are ringing a muffled peal?

China—carved unevenly with a blunt knife—may perhaps be regarded as unworthy of the name of music, but at least they have the advantage of being Chinese; and so long as Christian hymns—or Christian doctrines for that matter—insist upon appearing in a foreign garb, they stand little chance of attaining general popularity in China. We find, moreover, that a very large proportion of the hymns taught to Chinese converts are taken out of European collections and translated with the most painful literalness into bald Chinese.[1] A great many of the metaphors and devotional phrases employed in these hymns are not only foreign to the Chinese literary spirit, but are absolutely repulsive to Chinese ears and minds. It would be unfair to dwell on the extremely disagreeable features of many of the hymns delighted in by revivalists and their sympathisers, for I know that they meet with no approval whatever from the educated clergy or the higher types of missionaries. A parson of the Church of England describes them, without exaggeration, as "superficial and even shocking."[2] Yet we find that even *Hymns Ancient and Modern*—which include so many beautiful poems in addition to so much ridiculous doggerel—are not always of the kind that look well in a Chinese dress. One of the most eloquent of modern English writers on religious

[1] The extremely unsatisfactory condition of Church music and hymnology in Christian circles in China is now beginning to be recognised by a good many missionaries. A very interesting symposium on the subject appears in *The Chinese Record* for April, 1909. Many of the writers freely recognise the grotesque results often produced by the literal translation of English hymns into Chinese words. A sense of humour, if no loftier instinct, should have prevented a translator from putting the words "Sweet bye and bye" into literal Chinese (*T'ien chiang-lai*). The majority of the writers seem to be in favour of the retention of foreign hymn tunes, though the reasons given are scarcely convincing.

[2] The Rev. E. S. Shuttleworth in *The Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1907, p. 437.

subjects has spoken strongly of certain crudities of thought and language which disfigure many of the Church's hymns.

The most notable example of a Christian crudity thus apotheosised [he says] is one which, if we were not so familiar with it, would offend all the literary, and all the human, feeling in us each time we met with it in the many hymns where it is found. How many of our hymns are soiled with nastiness—I can find no other word—concerning *the blood of Jesus!* Even in a hymn in many ways so beautiful and appealing as that old friend of most of us, "Rock of Ages," it is difficult to read without a certain sense of distaste and revolt such lines as—

> "Let the Water and the Blood
> From Thy riven Side which flow'd
> Be of sin the double cure,
> Cleanse me from its guilt and power."[1]

With this writer's feelings of "distaste and revolt" all educated Chinese would be in complete sympathy. Perhaps Europeans are in the habit of looking upon us as a murderous and bloodthirsty race—their attention having been drawn to China only in times of political excitement or on account of the murder of a foreigner—but any one who has the most superficial acquaintance with the literature of my country will agree with me that "nastiness" of the kind referred to by the writer just quoted is rigorously excluded from Chinese poetry. It is rather curious that Mr. Garrod should have selected

[1] See H. W. Garrod's *The Religion of All Good Men*, pp. 205-6 (London, Constable & Co., 1906). *Cf.* Allan Hoben's article in *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1909, pp. 416-17. What is wanted, he says, is "a series of theological symbols consonant with modern culture. . . . To break up the present heavy and widespread lethargy would be no small blessing; for many of the old-thought symbols have lost their appeal, having become meaningless, disgusting, or impossible."

"Rock of Ages" for purposes of illustration, for that hymn, as it happens, is one of those that have been translated into Chinese and is sung lustily at missionary prayer-meetings. "The evening was also taken up," writes a missionary, "with catechising, preaching, and hymn-singing. 'Rock of Ages' is the great favourite here."[1] Mr. Garrod's justifiable complaint is of course applicable to a great number of other poems in the English hymnal. The following stanza appears in an otherwise attractive little hymn which has had the good fortune to be associated with touchingly beautiful music:

> "Come let us stand beneath the Cross;
> So may the Blood from out His Side
> Fall gently on us drop by drop,
> Jesus, our Lord, is crucified."[2]

The Christian whose upbringing of natural piety enables him to read such religious poetry as this without a shudder will be able with perfect equanimity to sing or peruse such lines as:

> "Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious Blood
> Shall never lose its power"[3];

or

> "Sprinkle Thy Blood upon my heart,
> And melt it with Thy dying love[4];

or

[1] *China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 26.

[2] Hymn No. 114. *Cf.* also Hymns No. 67 (st. 3), 113 (st. 4), 116 (st. 5), 288 (the last two lines of each stanza), and multitudes of others. My references are to the ordinary (unrevised) hymnal of the Church of England.

[3] Hymn 633, st. 3.

[4] Hymn 635, st. 4.

"Here I rest, for ever viewing
Mercy pour'd in streams of Blood[1];

or

"All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His Blood."[2]

One of the most disagreeable stanzas of this kind is to be found in a hymn which, curiously enough, is specially intended for mission services. It may find favour with Western missionaries, but it would find none with Eastern converts who had not already become partially de-orientalised.

"There is a fountain fill'd with Blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."[3]

These hymns, or others like them, form part of the regular religious food of the Chinese convert. I have before me a report of the conversion of a carpenter, who is admitted, by the way, to have been "one of the worst characters in the city." We are told that "it was cheering to hear this vile-mouthed fellow singing at his work about the blood of Jesus. 'Oh precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.'"[4] Comment, I think, is unnecessary. Yet there are Western philanthropists who wonder why the educated classes of China are so stony-hearted, so strangely impervious to the beauty of Christianity, and so blindly devoted to their own heathen philosophies! There are charitable supporters of foreign missions who cannot understand how it is

[1] Hymn 109. [2] Hymn 108.
[3] Hymn 633. Its author was the poet Cowper.
[4] *The Chinese Recorder*, May 1909, p. 295.

that the Chinese gentleman turns, not merely with coldness, but with disgust, from the choice specimens of Christian literature that have been specially selected by religious and linguistic experts as pre-eminently suitable for translation into the Chinese language. Verily may it be said of some of the missionary societies of Europe and America that "they know not what they do."

There are perhaps two chief reasons why nauseating rubbish of the kind described has been allowed to disfigure the Christian hymnals: one is that a vast number of people who like to join heartily in what they call a "rousing hymn" regard the words merely as a kind of pious excuse for the music, and while exercising their vocal abilities to the utmost, pay little or no attention to the meaning of the words they utter; and another is that most people who have been born and bred as Christians accept the hymn-book as part of their necessary theological equipment, and would no sooner question the literary excellence of its contents or the appropriateness of its metaphors than they would dream of going to church in everyday clothes or of adversely criticising the strange biological law which, according to the popular mythology of Christianity, provides angels with arms as well as wings.

Every one has heard of absurd mistakes made by children in connection with the meaning of the hymns and prayers which they learn by rote. An English writer of the present day mentions a few cases which may be taken as typical.[1] A child visited the Zoölogical Gardens and showed some signs of disappointment at what he saw there. An investigation of the matter

[1] See *The Happy Moralist*, by Hubert Bland, pp. 188–9. Mr. Bland says, with truth: "A very strange and interesting, though little noted, fact about children is that reticence of theirs, that reluctance to ask for explanations, to admit that they do not understand."

indicated that he felt aggrieved at not having been shown the "cross-eye bear." Further questioning elicited the fact that what the child had wanted to see was the cross-eye bear which he sang about in the hymn. The hymn was duly produced, and there in all truth were the words, "The sacred cross I bear." Another child mentioned by the same author used to repeat the words "pity my simplicity" as if they were " pity mice and plicity," and was under the impression that a plicity was "some sort of little furry live creature," but never had the courage to ask questions on the subject. Yet another child sang a certain hymn as if it began:

"Thou whose almighty word
Cows in the darkness heard,
And took their flight"—

the correct version of which may be found in Hymn 360 in *Hymns Ancient and Modern.* Another writer mentions a child whose idea of certain words in the Litany was "Three persons and one goat, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners."[1] Perhaps the main interest that such infantile mistakes have for most of us lies in the undoubted fact that a very large proportion of ordinary Christians arrive at old age without having really outgrown the crude theological notions of their childhood. They do not, indeed, make verbal blunders, because they have learned to read and to spell, but they retain the most rudimentary ideas concerning the great problems of religion. I refer, of course, to the mass of Christians who allow their clergy to do their thinking for them and who have never come into intellectual touch with what they and their religious advisers would call heterodox ideas and "infidel" literature. Such persons will listen quite unmoved to what they believe to be God-inspired

[1] *The Spectator*, Dec. 25, 1909.

accounts of atrocious crimes committed by divine command or with divine approval, and it will never occur to them to ask how the heavenly tyrant who tested the faith of Abraham by ordering him to make a sacrificial offering of his own son can possibly merit the adoration of mankind or deserve to be described as a god of limitless compassion.[1] The average non-inquisitive church congregation learns with perfect equanimity of how their Lord Jehovah ordered the Israelites to enter upon a savage war against the Midianites, and how his servant Moses authorised the indiscriminate slaughter of every man, every male child, and every married woman.[2] From another part of the same Scriptures it learns, with equal complacency, that God is the universal Father, and that his love and mercy are infinite. And because it has never outgrown the intellectual docility of childhood in matters affecting religion, it is stirred by no uneasy doubts as to the congruity of these two portraits of the divine character or as to the reality of the alleged revelation that forms the basis of its creed. At most there may be a few of its members who, feeling that things are not quite as they should be, console themselves with the thought that the theory of "progressive revelation," of which they may have vaguely heard, satisfactorily explains every difficulty and affords scientific proof that the Bible is in very truth God's holy and infallible Word.[3]

Little wonder is it that, having swallowed a proces-

[1] One child I know of was original enough to express surprise that Abraham was not arrested by the police before he had gone as far in the matter as he did; and indeed I suppose not the most orthodox Christian will maintain that the alleged commands of God would save a twentieth-century father from the gaol or the lunatic asylum if he were caught in the act of binding his son to a sacrificial altar. *Cf.* D. G. Ritchie's *Natural Rights*, p. 158 (Swan Sonnenschein, 1903).

[2] Num. xxxi.

[3] See pp. 282 *seq.*

sion of biblical camels, unthinking Christians do not strain at the gnats of the hymnal. They are not disturbed even by the bad morality of such hymns as this:

"Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Who givest all."[1]

As a purely business transaction this arrangement would meet with the entire approval of the most irreligious and sordid of speculators. I am well aware that Christian morality is built on a sounder basis than this: then why teach the sheep of the Christian fold to bleat aspirations toward an ethical ideal of which the most backward of pagan wolves might well be ashamed? Surely it must be painfully obvious that the average church congregation does not take the trouble to masticate the doctrines that are put into its mouth: it swallows them whole. The churchgoer who never dreams of worrying himself on week-days with the dreadful thought of hell, and has perhaps a nebulous idea that its existence has been satisfactorily disproved by the higher criticism, does not fail to pull himself back to rigorous orthodoxy on Sunday morning.

"He is found in human fashion,
Death and sorrow here to know,
That the race of Adam's children,
Doom'd by Law to endless woe,
May not henceforth die and perish
In the dreadful gulf below,
Evermore and evermore."[2]

The author of this poem deserves credit for the inge-

[1] *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 365. (Italics not in original.)
[2] *Ibid.*, No. 56.

nuity with which he has dealt in the fourth line with the problem of evil. It is not his fault, of course, if inquisitive sceptics insist upon an answer to the question, "Who promulgated the Law?" One is not allowed to heckle a clergyman.

It is clear that the compilers of the English hymnal were under no apprehension that the religious public would be carpingly critical; but surely they might have avoided insulting adult intelligence with words like these:

> "Around the Throne on high,
> Where night can never be,
> The white-robed harpers of the sky
> Bring ceaseless hymns to Thee."[1]

A stanza that occurs in a much later poem in the same collection might perhaps be considered worthy to follow the lines just quoted:

> "Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared,
> Unworthy though I be,
> For me a Blood-bought free reward,
> A golden harp for me."[2]

As I have said, I do not propose to quote the "superficial and even shocking" hymns that have been prepared for use at revival meetings and—in many cases—translated into Chinese for the benefit of the converted heathen. But the following extract from the record of a missionary will show that the persons in whose hands lies the selection of hymns suitable for translation into an Eastern language have made but a poor attempt to adapt themselves to Oriental taste in matters of religious or poetical expression:

[1] *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 30. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 633.

On the Lord's Day several thousand Miao attended the services, and about nine hundred sat around the table of the Lord. . . . It was melting to hear them sing, "My Lord and my King shed his blood," "All come and behold the Lamb of God," "On the Cross, on the Cross." . . . By night my voice was more than used up.[1]

I read recently of an English child of three years old who, having been taken to church—presumably for the first time—evinced a lively interest in the ascent of the clergyman to the pulpit. "Is he Jesus?" whispered the child. "No." "Then is he Punch?"[2] Perhaps it is legitimate to ask whether the converted Chinese and Miao—the Christian Miao, by the way—"*are all quite clear regarding the way of salvation*,"[3] have really a much more definite idea of Christ and Christianity than the little boy who was content to place Punch and Jesus side by side in his childish pantheon, and ready to pay just as much reverence to one as to the other.[4] And what is to be said of the European adult who strenuously employs his mature intellect in solving what he calls the practical problems of life? How often does he use that intellect for the purpose of correcting and developing the crude theological conceptions and vague religious ideas of his childhood? Sir Philip Sidney spoke truly, and in beautiful words, when he told us

[1] *China's Millions*, Feb., 1909, p. 26.

[2] This story is told by a writer in *The Spectator* of Dec. 25, 1909.

[3] *China's Millions*, Sept., 1909, p. 143.

[4] The following note by a missionary may serve to show that the ideas of the unconverted Chinese child with regard to Christianity are sometimes not unlike those of the baptised Christian child. "The foreign missionary is a *rara avis* in those parts, and some of the people apply to him the name of the one he represents. As, passing along the streets, one heard the children saying *Keh z Yiae-su!* ('That is Jesus!') one could not help thinking of the privilege and responsibility of bearing that Blessed Name," etc.—*China's Millions*, April, 1909, p. 56.

that most men are "childish in the best things till they be cradled in their graves."

If Western Christians who wish to evangelise the heathen of China would begin by getting rid of a great deal that is crude, ugly, and non-essential in their proselytising methods and in their forms of religious expression, they would not only gain more converts, and gain them more quickly, but they would cease to excite ridicule and contempt among the educated classes of this vast empire. Even in the more serious matters of dogma and creed Christianity must—if it wishes to enjoy anything like prosperity in the East—submit to a somewhat drastic process of modification and adaptation; and *it is essential* that it should do so without sacrificing honesty, sincerity, and candour. A few of the most advanced and highly cultured missionaries recognise this, though they are obliged for the sake of their weaker and more ignorant brethren to express themselves with almost excessive caution. One missionary, in India, goes so far as to declare that "before Christianity is to gain acceptance . . . it must be dissociated from many Western ideas and practices *which seem to us essential even to its very life.*"[1] "There is a distinct danger," says another, "of confusing the accidents of Christianity with its essentials."[2] It is now beginning to be realised that the Europeanising of the Oriental, whether in religious, social, or educational matters, is not the consummation that ought to be aimed at by Western missionaries. "We have given our Indian converts," says one writer, "English names and English dresses, English churches and pews; worse by far, we have imposed on them an English liturgy (verbally translated) as the medium for

[1] Dr. J. P. Jones in *India's Problems*, p. 356. (Italics not in original.)

[2] Rev. E. Greaves, of Benares, in *The East and the West*, Jan., 1910, p. 46.

the expression of their devotional life."[1] And the result, according to this candid missionary, is that, though the Indians are attracted by Christ, they are "profoundly repelled by Christianity."[2]

> Face the situation squarely and boldly [says one of the writers just quoted], accept the facts in all their simple and essential reality, and show that Christ may be accepted without any absolute necessity for adopting the Christianity of the West. Whether we like to confess it or not, the fact remains that Christianity, the Christianity which is set forth by missionaries, is Western. The formulation of its doctrines, the proportion and relative weight of its parts, its ecclesiastical organisations, its forms of worship, and in part, also, its ideals of the religious life, are Western. It is inevitable that they should be so. But Christ is not Western, and it is possible for men to accept Christ and to become his true followers without identifying themselves with any Western Church.[3]

He therefore boldly advises that Western missionaries, having entrusted the New Testament to their native followers and sympathisers, should give them absolute liberty to interpret it in the way they like best, and allow them to build up a Christianity of their own, free from any necessary connection with the Churches of the West.

If these proposals were to be carried out in their integrity, one result would be certain. Oriental Christi-

[1] Rev. W. E. S. Holland in *The East and the West*, July, 1909, p. 310.

[2] Is there not some reason to believe that there is a growing feeling of the same kind among the masses of the people in Christian Europe itself? "We have heard," says the Rev. R. J. Campbell, "of a meeting of workmen cheering Jesus and hissing the Churches" (*The New Theology*, 7th impr., p. 70).

[3] Rev. E. Greaves, of the London Missionary Society, in *The East and the West*, Jan., 1910, p. 46.

anity would discard—or rather would never dream of adopting—the preposterous code of dogmas that still receive lip-service in the West. There would be no sentimental reasons to prevent Orientals—as many devout Western Christians are prevented—from accepting the extremest results of modern criticism, and there is no doubt that in their new zeal for science and scientific methods the young biblical scholars of the Orient, free from Western supervision, would make short work of biblical inerrancy, virgin births, bodily resurrections, piacular sacrifices, the supernatural efficacy of prayer, everlasting punishments, and "tangled Trinities." It is a grave question whether the residue that remained intact after passing through the ordeal of criticism and adaptation would be considered worthy, by Western observers, of the name of Christianity. The faith of Christendom has itself gone through so much reinterpretation and readjustment during the last half-century that it is quite impossible to say what doctrines may or may not, fifty years hence, be considered essential to Christianity. However this may be, it is urgently necessary, in the higher interests of Western civilisation itself, that the educated supporters of foreign missions should discourage their emissaries from making Christianity an object of ridicule and contempt by perpetuating, in Eastern lands, its literary, devotional, and dogmatic crudities. There are many missionaries who seem to think they can hardly employ themselves in a more useful way than by teaching Chinese peasants to sing about sacrificed lambs and fountains filled with blood, or by playing upon their ignorance and credulity in matters of prayer and miracle and devil-possession, or by encouraging them to take emotional delight in the tawdry metaphors and vulgar imagery that occupy so conspicuous a

place in the inferior devotional literature of the West. These missionaries may be good, earnest Christians, and among their own people they might prove themselves to be ministering angels, and find every hour of the day profitably occupied. But in an Eastern land these men have no appropriate place, and if they shake off the dust from their feet and leave us to wallow in the heathenism for which they entertain such freely-expressed contempt, we shall bid them good-bye with no heart-heaviness and no sense of desolation.

Offer an alien race the boon of a great ideal, and if the boon is accepted at all you need have no fear but that its new possessors will give it fitting expression in terms of their own religious or artistic instincts. Let China have a share in Christ if you will, but let the Chinese construct their own christology.

CHAPTER XVIII

EASTERN AND WESTERN CIVILISATION, METAMORPHIC CHRISTIANITY, AND BIBLIOLATRY

EDUCATED Chinese are often much struck by a very curious and (from our point of view) disagreeable characteristic of European and American criticism of Oriental civilisation. It is repeatedly asserted—especially by Christian missionaries—that the evil features of Chinese political and social life are the result of our false religious and heathen ethics, and can be cured only by Christianity. Judicial and administrative corruption, sexual immorality, polygamy, the inferior position of women, foot-binding, prison-torture, and all the other evils that exist in China can be removed, we are told, by Christian teachings, and by no other agency. I have heard a missionary assert with dogmatic emphasis that the Chinese anti-opium campaign is foredoomed to failure unless China becomes Christian; yet I have little doubt that if an Arab or a native of India were to inform the English that they will never be cured of the vice of drunkenness until they become Mohammedans he would be regarded as a presumptuous fool. Another well-known missionary has stated in a widely-read book descriptive of the Chinese people that "China will never have patriotic subjects until she has Christian subjects."[1] In the course of a pulpit oration such a remark might be regarded as a pardon-

[1] A. H. Smith's *Village Life in China*, p. 349.

able clerical hyperbole, but as it occurs in a work that professes to be a serious contribution to sociology it cannot be allowed to pass without comment. To convince ourselves of its ineptitude we have only to remember that the most intensely patriotic of all the nations of the earth to-day is a nation of heathens.

I have frequently asked Europeans and Americans to what causes they attribute the greatness of Western nations—the dominant position in the world held by Europe and the transoceanic European races. The answers received are various. One declares plainly and bluntly that the races of North-western Europe are biologically and intellectually pre-eminent among the peoples of the globe. Another says that constant strife and warfare between a number of fairly equally-matched states has, through ruthless competition, resulted in the survival of the fittest. A third emphasises the strength-giving results of a vast commercial and industrial system; a fourth says that the prosperity of the West rests on its mechanical inventions, its scientific discoveries, and its successful application of science to its material needs. Another, again, lays stress on the legal and political principles of the Western countries and the advance of democracy. But these and other rather matter-of-fact explanations are those of laymen. When I ask Christian missionaries for their explanation of the dominance of the great Western nations I almost invariably receive one stereotyped answer: the influence of Christianity. I think there is nothing in the claims often put forward by missionaries that is more irritating than the confidence with which they give credit to Christianity for all the good things, and none of the bad things, that have befallen the Western people, and the readiness with which they attribute to Confucianism and our other native systems of religion and

ethics the evils that disfigure the social and spiritual life of China.[1] "Whatever good exists among us," writes a missionary, "has been developed as a result of Christian teaching."[2] And what about the bad? That, he would doubtless hasten to explain, has been developed *in spite of* Christian teaching. And may we not say that the evils of Chinese life have been developed *in spite of* Confucianism? It may well be admitted that at the present time Oriental civilisation has fallen into temporary decay, but is your Occidental civilisation in such a state that you can afford to throw stones?

We Europeans [says Mr. Leonard Alston] are trained to certain blindness as regards particular elements of our social environment, and we cannot understand the corresponding blindness of others. And so it happens quite naturally that "the inhumanity of the Chinese, not being the inhumanity of London, Paris, Berlin, or New York, can always be recited to arouse crowds in those cities to a righteous horror of the 'heathen Chinee'—just as the Western civilisations can be described in Peking from the point of view of the cultured Chinaman and be made the starting-point of a Boxer movement."[3]

The Congo atrocities hardly reflect credit on the Christian Power through whose agents they were perpetrated. Again, it was only the other day that the condition of the labourers at San Thomé and Principe was described as "slavery of the vilest possible type."[4] The social

[1] See above, pp. 24–6.

[2] *The East and the West*, Jan., 1910, p. 87.

[3] Leonard Alston's *The White Man's Work in Asia and Africa*, p. 39 (Longmans, 1907). The quotation by Mr. Alston is from an article by Mr. J. R. Macdonald in *The International Journal of Ethics*, July, 1901.

[4] Quoted from Sir Edward Carson, as reported in *The Times* of Dec. 6, 1909. A leader in the same newspaper, Dec. 7, remarked that the

condition of a considerable section of people of rich and prosperous England seems to be hardly better than that of the poorest classes of backward China. Listen to the words spoken on the subject by a British Cabinet Minister.

> There was a cry which broke upon their ears, a persistent cry of intolerable suffering from a section of this great population. Civilisation, which had brought, and science, which gave, many fair things to a large proportion of the population, had given nothing to the poorest and weakest among us. The condition of these was much worse, from the point of view of the degree of human misery, than the condition of the savages of the country he had recently visited [South Africa], or of the fierce, barbarous peoples of time long past.[1]

Another English writer makes equally melancholy comments on the condition of English institutions and civilisation. The multitude are depressed, he says,

> to a degree of ignorance, want, and misery which must touch every heart not made of stone. In the civilised world[2] there are few sadder spectacles than the present contrast in Great Britain of unbounded wealth and luxury with the starvation of thousands and tens of thousands, crowded into cellars and dens, without ventilation or light, compared with which the wigwam of the Indian is a palace. Misery, famine, brutal degradation in the neighbourhood and presence of stately mansions, which ring with gaiety

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slavery in question "could not be much worse. . . . The offspring of the miserable women were treated as if they were cattle; they became the property of the owners."

[1] The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, as reported in *The Times* of Feb. 8, 1908. *Cf.* Lafcadio Hearn's *Japan: An Interpretation*, pp. 488 *seq.*, 493–4.

[2] May I add, "or in the uncivilised"?

and dazzle with pomp and unbounded profusion, shock us as no other wretchedness does.[1]

Let us turn to another Western country which, we are often told, leads the van of Western civilisation. Mr. Weir, an American writer, says that citizens of the United States are murdered at the rate of two hundred a week, and that crime costs the Republic £275,000,000 per annum, or £700,000 a day.

The police administration of the average American city is so thoroughly entrenched behind the menacing power of the corrupted ballot that it can literally snap its fingers at any law that would set itself above it. Do you know that 75 per cent. of the criminals who are arrested for petty larceny, pocket-picking, hold-ups, and the like from the red-light districts of New York are freed by the ward politicians?

The police, he says, torture their prisoners, and the sufferers are absolutely without redress.

Ten thousand persons are murdered in this country every year—shot, strangled, poisoned, stabbed, or beaten with a club or a sand-bag. Of the murderers, two in every hundred are punished. The remaining ninety-eight escape—absolutely free! In many of our States the proportion of convictions is only half as great.[2]

From a book written by two American authors—professors of philosophy in the Universities of Columbia and Chicago—we learn that

many modern industries are conducted with more reference to financial gain than to life, and the annual roll of killed,

[1] These words are quoted by Mr. W. S. Lilly in *The Fortnightly Review*, Nov., 1909, p. 835. They occur in Dr. Channing's *Duty of Free States*.

[2] Quoted in *The Review of Reviews*, March, 1910, p. 269.

injured, and diseased in factory and railway practically equals the list of dead and wounded in a modern war. Most of these accidents are preventable. The willingness of parents on one side and of employers on the other, conjoined with the indifference of the general public, makes child-labour an effective substitute for exposure of children and other methods of infanticide practised by savage tribes.

These writers give the following example of American indifference to the safety of human life:

It is stated, upon good authority, that a street railway system in a large American city declined to adopt an improved fender which made it practically impossible to kill persons, because the annual cost would be $5,000 more than the existing expense for damages. This same system declined to adopt improved brakes which would reduce accidents to life and limb; and it was discovered that one of its directors was largely interested in the manufacture of the old brakes.[1]

Yet in spite of this ultra-Oriental state of barbarity, missionaries still urge it upon us, as one of the reasons why we should adopt the Western faith, that owing to the softening and inspiring influence of revealed truth, human life in the Christian West is regarded with reverence as "God's high gift" ever to be guarded "from scathe and wrong."

Believing that the essence of civilisation consists not in the arts of war but in those of peace, the Chinese were not wont to foster among men an excessive admiration for the military virtues, by which they might be led to despise the civil virtues that can have full play only under conditions of peace and security. Perhaps Chinese theory has been pushed too far in this direction, though after all it is only since the country has been

[1] Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics*, pp. 443–4 (New York, 1909).

faced by the constant danger of aggression from the bellicose and preposterously over-armed nations of Europe that the Chinese system has broken down. The country is now imitating European methods, and is beginning to arm, not because it approves of the mailed-fist form of civilisation (for which in its heart China has nothing but contempt and utter detestation), but because it is compelled to do so in self-defence. Probably there is nothing that goes more to the heart of the truly patriotic Chinese statesman of to-day—one who still reverences the old Chinese ideals and the doctrines of the ancient sages—than the fact that the Government is obliged to take the initiative in teaching the people to cultivate the arts of war and to put military efficiency in the forefront of the national ideals. M. Lamairesse, in his *L'Empire Chinois*, quotes a Chinese imperial edict in which occurs this significant observation: "Two sorts of Western strangers possess a desire to regenerate China: these bid us love our neighbours as ourselves; those sell us guns to enable us to slaughter our neighbours from a safe distance." Is it to be wondered at that the Chinese hesitate to accept Western interpretations of the doctrines of peace, good-will, charity, and humility from the representatives of countries which (as the Chinese now know perfectly well) are constantly sharpening their wits one against another, are profoundly jealous of each other's progress, suspicious of each other's motives, and distrustful of each other's politics, and are in the habit of throwing away billions of dollars annually on preparations for war?

We Chinese do not require to be told that Christianity does not inculcate a love of war, in spite of the fact that the Christian nations are the most warlike and aggressive of all peoples on earth. But here we may pause to ask, What *does* Christianity inculcate? Or rather,

what are the particular doctrines and ideals which the Christian West chooses to regard *at the present time* as essential to true Christianity? We Chinese find it extraordinarily difficult to obtain a clear answer to the question, *What is Christianity?* One of the greatest obstacles that confront any one who wishes to discuss Christian principles candidly and unreservedly, or to come to "close grips" with Christianity as a body of religious doctrine, consists, as we have already seen,[1] in the dexterous manner in which theology sidles from one position into another while stoutly maintaining all the time that it has never shifted its ground, and the protean skill with which, by means of ceaseless reinterpretations, it contrives to adjust itself (with painful awkwardness) to ever-varying conditions, while loudly proclaiming that it has hurled back all the assaults of the infidel enemy and is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The Roman Catholics, indeed, pride themselves on saying exactly what they mean—their definition of transubstantiation, for example, however preposterous the doctrine itself may be, is clear to the dullest intelligence[2]—and it is therefore possible for a Chinese to form a definite conception of what the doctrines are that he is accepting or rejecting when he makes his final decision for or against the faith of the Catholic Church. But in the case of the Anglican and Protestant Churches it is not so easy for him to make up his mind. If he declares his unhesitating disbelief in a certain doctrine or dogmatic statement to-day, it is quite possible that the day after to-morrow it may be reinterpreted in such a way that he sees in it nothing

[1] See pp. 29–33, 38–9, 59, 147, 269.

[2] See, for instance, the section entitled "Catholic Doctrine on the Real Presence" in *A Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicae Curae,"* pp. 24–5 (Longmans, Green, & Co., 1898).

repugnant to his reason. For instance, the Anglican and allied Churches require their adherents, or at least their priests, to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles, the fourth of which states in language that certainly seems refreshingly free from ambiguity of any kind that Christ not only rose from the dead but carried his human flesh and bones up to heaven, where he is still sitting. When we Chinese assure our Western teachers, with emphasis, that we totally disbelieve in this monstrous doctrine, and indeed regard it as almost insulting to human intelligence that we should be expected to believe in it, we are probably told (at least by persons who call themselves liberal theologians) that the real meaning of the Article is quite different from what its plain words seem to indicate, and that as reinterpreted it contains nothing to which any reasonable mind could possibly object. Liberal theologians seem to overlook the fact that when the Thirty-nine Articles were drawn up they were accompanied by a declaration to the effect that "no man hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, *but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.*" It may be replied that this preliminary declaration has no binding force. In form, indeed, it is merely the *ipse dixit* of the English sovereign—the "supreme head, on earth, of the Church of England"; but at least it unmistakably shows that the theologians who drew up the Articles deliberately put them into the plainest language possible, for the express purpose of leaving no loophole for any reinterpretation of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and of abolishing those "curious and unhappy differences which have for so many hundred years, in different times and places, exercised

the Church of Christ." If modern theologians read into the Articles new meanings that are not in accordance with their "literal and grammatical sense," it is evident that they have in principle abrogated the Articles and merely retain them in the Prayer Book as a kind of fetish; for it is obvious that the significance of language lies not in words as such, but in the meaning which they are intended to convey. The theologians of 1562 undoubtedly meant what they said. If you now retain their words but put new meanings into them it is absurd to maintain that your theology is the same as theirs. The spirit is changed, the letter remains; to whom or to what are you showing respect or reverence when you keep the written word but empty it of the meaning that properly belongs to it, and fill it to the brim with a new meaning of your own? Such considerations as these are more serious than they appear to be, for they do not affect the Thirty-nine Articles only; they affect also the Creeds and the Bible.

The Roman Catholics still hold, as a necessary article of faith, that the Scriptures are absolutely exempt from error of any kind, and were directly inspired by God himself, though the sole right of interpretation is reserved to the infallible Church. Protestant views of biblical inspiration have varied enormously, from the Reformation up to the present time; but the following is noteworthy as an indication of the ridiculous extreme to which "inspirationists" were prepared to go:

> Quenstedt holds that everything in Scripture comes from the infallible divine assistance and direction, from a special suggestion and dictation of the Holy Spirit; and he says that because Scripture is inspired it is of infallible truth and free from every error; canonical Scripture contains no lie, no falsehood, not the very slightest error either in fact or in word; whatever things it relates, all and every

one of them, are of the very highest truth, whether they be ethical or historical, chronological, typographical, or verbal; there is no ignorance, no want of knowledge, no forgetfulness, no lapse of memory in Scripture.[1]

When the Bible was shown to be a medley of myths, folk-tales, poems, fables, and more or less veracious historical narratives, and to be plentifully sprinkled with errors of fact, philosophical crudities, and bad morality, the Churches found themselves faced by the difficult task of reconstructing the bases of religion without disturbing the faith of the unlearned multitude. It was a very natural instinct that impelled them to resist to the utmost of their power the assaults on biblical inerrancy. Orthodox Catholics, of course, treated criticism with a lofty contempt, and continue to do so to this day, but the Protestants, having no infallible Church at their backs, felt obliged to take up the challenge thrown down by the critics. Unable to sustain their stupendous claim in its entirety, and compelled at last most reluctantly to admit that in matters of historical fact the Bible was not wholly free from error, they made brave attempts to establish themselves in the new position that the Bible did not profess to teach history or science, but the proper relations between God and man; and that, although mistakes in matters of fact might have occurred through the imperfections of the human instruments employed by the Deity in communicating his revelation to mankind, this liability to error in no way affected the majesty and eternal truth of the

[1] Prof. T. M. Lindsay, D.D., in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., *s.v.* "Inspiration." It need hardly be said that almost identical views have been held and expressed by Brahmans and Mohammedans concerning the Veda and the Koran; and I understand that very similar claims have been made on behalf of the Book of Mormon and the works of Mrs. Eddy.

moral and religious teachings enshrined in the sacred canon. Alas, even from this position the bibliolaters are fast being driven away, and now they are seeking refuge in the somewhat nebulous theory of "progressive revelation."

Only a few years ago a Christian who questioned the moral perfection of both Old and New Testaments would have been regarded as little better than a criminal. A few generations ago he would have been in danger of a piteous death by fire. But so rapid have been the theological changes of modern times that even high-placed Church dignitaries can speak their mind candidly on the subject without fear even of such a mild punishment as ecclesiastical censure. Writing of the theory of the infallibility of Scripture, the Bishop of Birmingham says that, according to this theory, "no seemingly scientific or historical statement of Scripture could be otherwise than true. Now I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that that position has been riddled by modern science and historical criticism, and is no longer reasonably tenable. It is cruelty to young people to bring them up in the belief that a statement about natural processes, or a statement in historical form, is necessarily true because it is in the Bible."[1] Prof. Sanday remarks that "scholars have been compelled to point out, in the interest of truth, that this definition [of biblical infallibility] will not hold."[2] A third high ecclesiastical authority is

bold to maintain that we assume all too easily the fitness of the Hebrew Scriptures to serve as a basis for moral instruction . . . the moral difficulties of the Old Testament

[1] From "The Old Theory of Inspiration," in *New Theology Lectures*, by the Bishop of Birmingham.

[2] *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (Oxford, 1907).

are by no means limited to certain episodes and passages which we may call classical, such as the destruction of the Canaanites, Deborah's praise of the treachery of Jael, the sacrifice of Isaac, the deception of Jacob, and Jephthah's vow. Ethical problems manifest themselves on almost every page, and are woven into the very texture of the whole. . . . Must not careful reservations be made before we explicitly maintain that this heterogeneous material, containing elements so crude and contradictory, is fitted for laying the foundations of Christian character? . . . We have plain proof of lack of principle in the fact that the Church of England, impelled by tradition, still orders the reading of passages which in any other connection would be sternly repressed. . . . God is continuously represented as speaking and acting in ways which offend our moral sense. He issues commands to slaughter even the babes unborn. Many of his punishments are wholesale and capricious. He gives his formal approval of slavery, allowing little children to be bought and sold as well as adults. He provides that Jewish slaves shall be more kindly treated than other slaves. He gives the strange law that a man shall not be punished for beating his slave to death if the poor assaulted wretch does not die out of hand but lingers for a day or two; and adds the still stranger reason that the slave is his owner's money. Such are some of the more striking instances from what constitutes a fairly homogeneous whole.[1]

I fear that these courageous expressions of opinion on the part of two bishops and an ecclesiastical professor will not be received with applause by the great majority of missionaries in China.[2] At present there is

[1] These remarkable admissions are not the statements of an Agnostic or Rationalist, but of the Right Rev. J. Edward Mercer, D.D., Bishop of Tasmania. (See *The Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1909, pp. 333 *seq.*).

[2] It may be noted that the bibliolaters are still devoting themselves with all the old energy to scattering the Scriptures broadcast through the world. The following quotation is from *China's Millions* of May, 1909,

a scheme on foot to obtain subscriptions from Chinese Christians with a view to presenting the little Emperor of China with a beautiful copy of the Christian Scriptures in Chinese. Is it too late to implore the promoters of this scheme to give most earnest consideration to the words with which the Bishop of Tasmania closes his fearlessly-spoken article?

We are still slaves to imperfect theories and worn-out preconceptions. It is bad enough to raise such moral discords in acts of public worship. It is still worse to set vibrating such moral discords in what Plato calls "the tender souls of children," which, "like blocks of wax," are ready to take any impression, and which are so quickly deformed and distorted.[1]

We Chinese possess an ethical literature of our own which we firmly believe to be fully equal in value to the whole Christian Bible, and immensely superior to the

p. 77: "*The Bible in China.*—The British and Foreign Bible Society, we are thankful to learn, issued last year more than one and a half million copies of the Scriptures. This is, we believe, the first time that the figure of one and a half million has been passed by this one Society. It will be interesting to know what the actual circulation was, for all the Scriptures issued to the agencies are not necessarily put into circulation the same year. During 1907 the circulation was 1,212,409, which was well in advance of previous years, so that it appears probable that the circulation in 1908 will be at least equally high, if not in advance. This large and increasing demand for the Scriptures is a sign which cannot but rejoice the heart of all believers."

In *Present Day Conditions in China*, published by the China Inland Mission in 1908, a pictorial diagram is given for the purpose of conveying to the imagination some idea of the prodigious circulation of the Bible in China. According to this work, "the total circulation of the Word of God in China from the commencement up to 1907" amounted to 379,243 Bibles, 2,347,057 New Testaments, and 31,128,939 portions, or 33,855,239 in all. The societies mainly responsible for this result are the British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the American Bible Society.

[1] *The Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1909, p. 345.

Old Testament taken alone. I will venture to assert that it is highly undesirable that the imperial tutors should allow themselves to be persuaded to use the Old Testament as a basis for our young Emperor's moral education, and there are patriotic Chinese who would most strenuously resist any proposal of the kind.

The older generation of missionaries came to China armed with a verbally-inspired and infallible sacred book and a set of absolutely and uniquely true doctrinal formulas which had been specially revealed to them by the Creator of the Universe; and with these weapons they prepared to take the citadels of Oriental religion by storm. "China," said one of them, "is, all things considered, the Gibraltar, the Sevastopol, of heathenism."[1] The same writer was distressed to find that the Chinese regarded the inexpressibly crude doctrine of the resurrection of the body not only "with undisguised unbelief," but also "with open ridicule and contempt," and he was no less disgusted to perceive that they "cling most fondly to the sentiments of Confucius and Mencius, and most tenaciously to the dogmas of Taoism and Buddhism. *The finest, most acute, and best-educated talent of Christendom is required to show them the absurdity, the insufficiency, and the sinfulness of these sentiments and these dogmas*, and to teach them a more excellent and a perfect way."[2] The task was perhaps beyond the powers even of the finest, most acute, and best-educated minds of Christendom, for certainly none of our Western teachers have yet succeeded in convincing us that the sentiments of Confucius and Mencius are either absurd or sinful. If Confucianism and Buddhism are in some respects insufficient for all our spiritual and moral needs, it is far from certain that we shall exchange them for so

[1] *Social Life of the Chinese*, by the Rev. Justus Doolittle (1868), p. 607.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 608. (The italics are mine.)

elusive a system as Christianity, though it is not improbable that we shall, *more Christiano*, adapt our own religion to the changed ideals and new conditions of modern times by putting it through a process of modification and re-interpretation. In that case we shall certainly consider ourselves at perfect liberty to adopt, modify, or make what use we please of all that we consider good and noble and inspiring in the Christian or in any other system of religion or ethics.

The early missionaries (not to mention some of their successors still in China), full of bigotry and ignorance, took the inadequacy and sinfulness of our native religion and philosophy for granted, simply because they were not of Christian origin. In their eyes everything good was Christian, and what was not Christian could only be bad. So Confucius and Buddha were consigned to hell, and we Chinese were assured that we should all follow our revered ancestors to the same disagreeable abode unless we hastened to believe in the "glad tidings" of Christianity. As time went on and the abler and more enlightened missionaries began to make a more or less serious study of our native literature and philosophy, and the comparative study of religions began to open out new vistas of unimagined knowledge to the startled minds of European scholars, the old arrogance and intolerance began to show signs of melting away; but it has not vanished yet, and cannot vanish so long as a considerable proportion of our Western teachers cling to the assumption that Christianity (in one or other of its multitudinous and ever-changing forms) is the exclusive depositary of truth, and the sole medium through which the wicked hearts of men may be induced to follow what is right and good.

This assumption is inherent even in the writings of missionaries who have taken an intelligent interest in

non-Christian religions. Dr. Edkins seems to think he is uttering a serious condemnation of Chinese religious theories when he declares that

> an ethical test is the only one they know. When the evidence of a new religion is presented to them, they at once refer it to a moral standard, and give their approval with the utmost readiness if it passes the test. They do not ask whether it is divine, but whether it is good. This tolerant mode of viewing other religions is one of the effects of the introduction of Buddhism into China. The Chinese having this mode of viewing religions as equally good, the difficulty often felt by the Christian missionary in persuading them to believe in the religion of Christ will be easily perceived. He may prove its divinity, but this does not go far with a latitudinarian people, who give their assent equally to all systems that have a good moral code.[1]

It was the purpose of Dr. Edkins to show how inadequate and erroneous are the Chinese notions of religion, and the missionary bias in this passage is evident; but even if we accept his statements at their face-value, it is an open question whether they do not speak as well for the Chinese as for the European point of view. When introduced to a foreign religion, says this worthy missionary, the Chinese *do not ask whether it is divine, but whether it is good.* Granting the correctness of this statement, as I believe we well may (for the prevalent philosophical attitude of the Chinese is undoubtedly pragmatic), have we, after all, very much to be ashamed of? Surely we may reasonably contend that if, regarding the good as of secondary importance, we were to devote ourselves to a search for the divine, we might end by obtaining neither; whereas if we seek and find the good, we may safely leave the divine to find its own way to us.

[1] *Religion of China* (revised ed., 1893), by Joseph Edkins, D.D., pp. 74-5.

CHAPTER XIX

WESTERN EDUCATION IN CHINA AND THE UNITED UNIVERSITIES SCHEME

ONE of the most momentous political movements of the last half-century has been the rapid rise of an Oriental state into the ranks of the Great Powers. Had this extraordinary event never taken place, had Japan been content to remain in a condition of what used to be called Oriental seclusion, there might have been comparatively little interest shown to-day in the birth of a new China; but there is now a vague feeling in the Western mind that what Japan has done on a comparatively small scale may be done on an immensely greater scale by an awakened China, and interest in the affairs of the great continental empire is intensified accordingly. The question that many Western people are now beginning to ask themselves with some anxiety is this: if a comparatively small and poor Oriental nation, regarded by their grandfathers as powerless and uncivilised, can earn for herself by sheer prowess in the arts of war and peace the splendid "place in the sun" that Japan now occupies, what will be the future position of a neighbouring state that possesses far superior resources, a much vaster area, and a population equally hardy, industrious, and intelligent, and ten times greater in numbers?

A secret of Japan's success was that, in spite of her

full acceptance of Western teaching and example in matters of political and scientific equipment, she never cut herself wholly adrift from her own past in respect of her social, moral, and religious traditions and ideals. But in China there is a large class of would-be reformers who seem to aim at nothing less than the creation of a bridgeless chasm between the Old China and the New, and this constitutes one of the most serious dangers that the empire will have to face during the early years of its new career. Thus a statesmanlike solution of the educational problem is perhaps the most pressing duty that confronts the wise men of China to-day, for the manner in which this problem is solved is likely to be the chief factor in determining China's future rank among the nations of the world. So far, the great question of education has not been treated with a tithe of the seriousness it deserves. It is true enough that schools and colleges have been springing up in all parts of the country during recent years, and some good work has been done by various missionary schools and colleges, but the number of properly equipped and adequately staffed schools is still very small in proportion to the needs of the vast population of China. Most of the existing establishments may be regarded as representative of haphazard experimental movements in education rather than as the result of a definite educational policy.

At present the kind of Western learning that the Chinese are desirous of acquiring is chiefly of a scientific and technical character. This is all very well as far as it goes, but what many of China's own sons, and some of her sympathetic Western friends, observe with sorrow is that while she is beginning to show unmerited contempt for her old Confucian ideals, with their ethical and social superstructure, she has nothing ready to take their place. Her admiration, such as it is, of Western

civilisation, confines itself to the materialistic developments of that civilisation; and while she may accomplish much in the direction of the nourishment of the body it is feared that she may be endangering her ultimate welfare by impoverishing the soul. What is to be done about the nurture of China's soul is, indeed, a question that is being debated with great earnestness by academic and religious leaders in England and America, and several schemes have already been put forward to give effect to the various conclusions at which they have so far arrived.

This is pre-eminently an age of soul-study. Not content with investigating the state of his own soul, the Anglo-Saxon is fond of scrutinising (with no unworthy aim) the souls of his neighbours. And thus he has devoted whole books to the analysis of the Soul of the Far East, the Soul of the Burmese, the Soul of the Negro, the Soul of the Turk, the Soul of Spain, while the Soul of the Japanese has had numerous enthusiastic interpreters. China also has a Soul, though most people seem to think it is but a poor thing. The Christian missionaries have known of its existence for a long time, but as their object is to save it from eternal ruin they are perhaps rather too apt to take a gloomy view of its present condition. Yet if it be not of the kind that soars (though why not?) there really seems to be no sufficient reason for consigning it to the Bottomless Pit. If the Chinese, in their anxiety to acquire Western civilisation, are showing a greater relish for its practical and material results than for its religious and ethical accompaniments, this does not necessarily mean that culture, high thinking, the pursuit of "sweetness and light," are distasteful to the Chinese mind. The Chinese themselves have produced poets, artists, philosophers, religious thinkers, whose merits will some day receive from

Europe very much higher tributes of admiration than they have received hitherto, and will afford ample proof that the Chinese are far from being a "soulless" people. Yet it is unquestionably most right and fitting that the people of China should be taught something of the nobler ideals as well as the material accomplishments of the West, if only in order that their respect for their foreign teachers may not, some day, give place to a dangerous contempt—dangerous to Europe and America as to China herself. For, indeed, the present anxiety of the Western peoples to teach the Chinese something of the higher flights of the Occidental mind in the sublime regions of religion, imaginative literature, philosophy, and art is perhaps based to no small extent on the instinct of self-preservation. There seems to be a vague feeling that if China, having cut herself adrift from her own traditional culture, acquires the secrets of your material successes without being initiated into your moral and spiritual ideals, she may possibly develop into an amazingly prosperous, but cruel, sensual, selfish, and cynical tyrant who, having become equipped with every modern engine of industry and warfare, will proceed to hurl four hundred million Frankenstein-monsters against the towers and citadels of Western civilisation.[1] Whether a sense of this danger exists or not, it seems clear that, if so huge a nation as the Chinese—embracing a quarter of the world's population—has decided to take lessons in civilisation from the nations of the West, it is of the utmost

[1] Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P., speaking at the Mansion House, London, in support of the United Universities Scheme, in March, 1910, prophesied that the results of the awakening of China "would far surpass in interest all domestic politics and all foreign politics. . . . What was in doubt was whether China one hundred years hence would be a beneficent influence, or one beyond experience and almost beyond imagination destructive and dangerous."—*The Weekly Times*, March 18, 1910.

importance that the teachings should not be only of the kind that will result in the construction of shipyards, factories, mills, battleships, railways, telegraphs, and aëroplanes.

Of the various schemes that have recently been framed with a view to instructing the Chinese in the ethical and spiritual sides of Western civilisation, one of the most important is that known as the China Emergency Scheme. Its promoters ask for a sum of at least £100,000 "in order that existing philanthropic and religious societies in China may establish work involving capital outlay which these societies could not provide." As to the allocation of the funds, it is proposed that £40,000 should be granted for medical training colleges, £40,000 for "institutions for the education of Chinese Christian teachers and pastors," and the remaining £20,000 for "the translation and publication of the best Western literature." Thus it will be seen that a great portion of the large sum of money which the British and American public and others are asked to subscribe is to be applied to the extension of the work that has been carried on for many years past by the various Protestant missions. For the medical and surgical work done by the medical missions, no praise can be too high. Perhaps no philanthropic enterprise in the world is deserving of warmer encouragement or more generous support. Nor can any exception be taken to the dissemination in China of "the best Western literature," provided that the choice of what is best be entrusted to cultivated men of letters rather than to persons whose literary judgments are apt to be biassed by theological prepossessions. The value of the work done by the purely evangelical missions is more open to question, as I hope the foregoing pages have done something to prove.

In the view of the promoters of this scheme, and of numerous other men and women in Europe and America, the higher aspects of Western civilisation which it is so necessary should be revealed to the Chinese may be found in Christianity, and can be found nowhere else. Let us leave the discussion of this point for the present and pass to the consideration of another proposal—that known as the "United Universities Scheme."[1] To avoid unintentional misrepresentation, I quote the following passages from an authoritative letter addressed by the Committee to *The Times* and published in the issue of July 29, 1909:

Our Committee is quite distinct from the China Emergency Committee, having been formed in March, 1908, of resident graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, and shortly afterwards joined by the Rev. Lord William Cecil, Sir E. M. Satow (late his Majesty's Minister at Peking), and others. . . . It became clear to them that at the present crisis of moral and intellectual upheaval the great need of China is a university to bring the highest traditions of Western education into the heart of the country, and so to promote that fusion of the best in Eastern and Western thought, and that better mutual understanding between China and the West, which is of such vital importance for the future of the whole human race. . . . Western education, as it is at present being eagerly absorbed by the youth of China, brings with it great dangers. It destroys all the old religious and moral sanctions, and puts nothing in their place. A university, therefore, which gave intellectual, and neglected moral, education would be of doubtful value. It is not sufficient, therefore, to provide a staff

[1] No reference is made in these pages to the important scheme (already being realised) for establishing a university in Hongkong. The fact that this university will be in British territory, and to some extent under British Government control, differentiates the scheme from those now under consideration.

of able and efficient professors, though this is essential. The students must reside in colleges or hostels, under some kind of moral discipline and supervision. Most, if not all, of the hostels in our proposed university would be controlled by Christian bodies, and these would naturally provide religious instruction within their walls on the lines of their own denominations. The students, however, would not necessarily be Christian, nor would they be unduly influenced to become such. The professors will not be required to submit to any religious tests or to teach religious subjects, but they must be men in complete sympathy with Christian ideals.[1]

The letter goes on to say that Hankow, which, with the adjacent cities of Wuchang and Hanyang, constitutes the commercial and industrial capital of Central China, has been selected as "the most central and commanding site" for the proposed university. There are large numbers of missionaries in this locality, and

there already exist three considerable Christian colleges, English and American, of different denominations, all of which have expressed a keen desire to federate round a central professoriate founded on the lines we suggest.[2] Thus a substantial nucleus of the university is already *in esse.*

It is natural enough that in looking for a suitable site for the university, the Committee should, in the circumstances, be strongly inclined to favour Hankow, but it is to be hoped that this point will not be decided too hastily. If the university is to be to China what Oxford

[1] Does this mean the ideals taught by Christ, or does it mean the ideals of Western civilisation which, arbitrarily or otherwise, have been brought into association with Christianity?

[2] The three colleges referred to are doubtless the Griffith John College in Hankow, Boone College in Wuchang, and the Wesleyan College.

and Cambridge are to England, it will appear to many old Oxonians and Cantabs now resident in the Far East that no worse situation could possibly be chosen than that of Hankow and its sister-cities, in spite of (partly in consequence of) the fact that those cities are together destined, in all probability, to become one of the busiest centres of the world. One of the most characteristic features of the University of Oxford is the highly privileged position that it occupies in Oxford city. The civic authorities are in many respects overshadowed by the high academic dignitaries; the University has jurisdiction over its undergradustes even in the streets of the town; no public entertainment can take place in Oxford without the permission of the Vice-Chancellor; strict rules govern the behaviour of every undergraduate both within and without the actual academic precincts; his college professes to look after his interests (and does so with very considerable success) not only during lecture hours but during his leisure time also. All this can be done with comparative ease, because Oxford, as a city, is dominated by its great University. If the colleges were transferred to London, Manchester, or Glasgow, the whole system would have to be reorganised and some of the characteristic features of Oxford as a training-ground for young Englishmen would necessarily crumble to pieces. The same remarks apply, of course, with equal force to Cambridge. Now one of the main objects of the proposed Chinese university, as we have seen, is to supply the youth of China with a moral as well as with an intellectual training. That a university at Hankow would be commercially successful there cannot be the least doubt; that it would be thronged with eager students is unquestionable; that it would become perhaps the most brilliant intellectual centre of China or of Asia is not impossible; but

such moral lustre as it might be capable of radiating would be sadly dimmed by the mists of its squalid surroundings. The Hankow cities have a very mixed and sometimes turbulent population; they contain many haunts of vice, frequented by all ranks of society; and some of the political and social, as well as moral, influences necessarily surrounding the young Chinese students would be nearly as bad as could be imagined. Many of the objections to Hankow are doubtless inapplicable to the spacious and commodious European Settlement, and it is there, perhaps, that the buildings would be erected. But the Settlement, after all, is a mere suburb, and if it is proposed to place the adjoining Chinese cities "out of bounds" for the university students, the academic authorities will inevitably be compelled to establish a proctorial system on a much vaster scale than ever was dreamed of on the banks of the Cam or Isis. Thus it seems certain that if the intention is to establish a university that will supply the sons of the Chinese gentry with a good moral training as well as a first-rate liberal education, Hankow is perhaps one of the worst sites that could be selected. Even its climate leaves a great deal to be desired: weary and white-lipped Englishmen have been heard to describe it as the worst in China, though this is probably an exaggeration. There is little to complain of in winter, as a rule, but the summer months are hot, damp, and unhealthy, and that season always witnesses a great exodus of Europeans—missionaries, consular officials, and merchants—to the delightful sanatoria that are fortunately to be found in the hill-regions of several of the Yangtse provinces.[1] Hankow possesses an advan-

[1] It may be said that during the summer months the university would be closed; but it is quite unlikely that the long-vacation system will commend itself to young China, eager for Western knowledge and impatient

tage in its central position and accessibility, but as the railway system is extended throughout China this advantage will to a large extent be neutralised, and in any case all points on the Yangtse as far as Ichang (a thousand miles fron the coast) can even now be reached almost as easily and comfortably as Hankow. On the whole, a good case might perhaps be made out for establishing the university at or near one of the sanatoria to which reference has just been made. Kuling, for example, is close to Kiukiang, on the right bank of the Yangtse in Anhui, and in the same range are the beautiful temple-studded hills known as Lu Shan. Centuries ago, Chinese students flocked to those hills (especially to the famous White Deer Grotto, with its endowed college) for purposes of quiet study and to sit as disciples at the feet of some of the foremost philosophers, poets, and religious leaders of their day. The locality is rich in tender and romantic associations connected with the venerable China that is passing away. What more fitting situation could be chosen for a great modern university than the Lu hills, where the richest flowers of Western learning would mingle their fragrance with that of the fairest blossoms of the wisdom of Old China?[1]

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of delay. In some respects the English system must necessarily be modified, perhaps to the extent of establishing a "summer-session" on Scottish lines.

[1] The latest information is that the objections to the Wu-han cities from the disciplinary and hygienic point of view have been realised, and that it is now proposed to build the university on the hills that lie some distance to the east. This is very welcome news; but there is still much to be said in favour of the more secluded site I have suggested. One not unimportant consideration is the price of land. The latest syllabus of the United Universities Scheme states that "it is, of course, impossible to give an exact estimate of the cost till actual sites are being treated for, but recent transactions in land near the most suitable sites suggest the figure £20,000." A site at a greater distance from Hankow might be obtained for a much smaller sum than this; indeed, if the sympathy and

Perhaps it may not be out of place to express a hope that the plans for the buildings will not be hopelessly out of keeping with Chinese ideas of architectural beauty. The West is beginning at last to take some interest in Chinese pictorial art; the time will come when it will learn to appreciate Chinese ideas in architecture as well, though there is still a tendency to regard them as merely fantastic. At all events, care should be taken to ensure that the university buildings shall be fair to look upon as well as useful and convenient in design. Most lovers of Oxford and Cambridge gladly admit that the splendour and beauty of the buildings—King's College chapel, for example, or the tower and cloisters of Magdalen—are among the most precious and permanent educational influences, using the term in its widest sense, that their *alma mater* wields over their hearts and minds.

But the question of the site and buildings of the proposed university sinks almost into insignificance beside the much more serious question of the manner in which it is to supply a substitute for "the old religious and moral sanctions" which, according to the promoters of the scheme, Western education in China is at present helping to destroy. As we have seen, it is proposed to place "most, if not all, of the hostels" under the control of various Christian bodies which "would naturally provide religious instruction within their walls on the lines of their own denominations." It is true that the students "would not necessarily be Christians, nor would they be unduly influenced to become such," but apart from the fact that different missionaries might take very divergent views of what constitutes "undue influence," it stands to reason that curiosity, if nothing else, will

support of the Chinese authorities were successfully enlisted it is not improbable that a site could be obtained as a free grant from Government.

impel nearly every intelligent Chinese student to make some acquaintance with the religious teachings of the missionary bodies by which his hostel happens to be controlled, especially when he is assured (as he doubtless will be) that the "Western knowledge" which it is his object to acquire is deeply rooted in the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion; and once he shows an interest in Christianity by attendance at religious services, he will no doubt be regarded as a future convert, and will receive special attention accordingly. In any case, there are missionary teachers who would find it practically impossible to refrain from making the utmost possible use of their golden opportunities to bring wandering sheep into the Christian fold.

For this it would be unfair and ungrateful to reproach them. Moreover, while the university is in its infancy, and perhaps for many years to come, the greater number of the students will have been prepared for matriculation at the various mission-schools, and when they go to the university they will doubtless remain to a greater or less extent under the influence of the different denominations in whose schools they received their preparatory education. But this state of things will not last for ever. Secular schools will be constantly increasing in numbers and efficiency, and every succeeding batch of candidates for matriculation will contain a smaller and smaller proportion of mission-scholars. Thus it will be necessary, before long, to devise a method of providing for the ever-growing number of students who, while fully qualified to pass the entrance-tests, and perhaps highly appreciative of the higher aspects of Western civilisation, may yet be strongly averse from associating themselves in any way with formulated Christianity.

By no means do I wish to confuse the Christianity that may be taught in the great mission-colleges, such

as those already established at Hankow, with the absurd, contemptible, and demoralising medley of religious notions that form the stock-in-trade of missionaries of the class dealt with in the foregoing chapters. On the contrary, although I am personally attracted by no existing system of doctrinal Christianity and have no desire to see the Chinese people adopt any of the Christian creeds or confessions of faith, I shall welcome the establishment of a great Christian university, not only as a valuable civilising agency, but also as a force that may go far to neutralise the terrible injury done to Western prestige, to Chinese self-respect, to the cause of civilisation and international amity and (as I believe) to the cause of true religion, by the misdirected efforts of the half-educated and fanatical missionaries of the type described in this Appeal. It is true that these persons devote themselves chiefly to preaching the gospel, holding prayer-meetings, and distributing tracts and "Bible-portions," and it might therefore appear that their influence in matters affecting education can in any case be only slight; but their child-like enthusiasm, their numerical preponderance, their strong financial backing, and the strenuous zeal with which they penetrate every nook and corner of the empire, have been dangerously successful in enabling them to pose before the Chinese masses as the representatives of the best features of Western civilisation. Even the official classes have been pitiably deceived; and in these facts we may find a partial explanation of the strange mixture of sympathy and loathing, admiration and contempt, with which the puzzled China of to-day regards the culture and religion of the West.

It would be a thousand pities if, through some misunderstanding of the true state of affairs, the promoters and supporters of the university scheme were to allow

the academic hostels to pass even partially under the control or influence of missionaries of the type it has been my task to describe in these pages. There is but too little room for doubt that before long they would bring ridicule and contempt on the university and check for an indefinite period that "fusion of the best in Eastern and Western thought" and that "better mutual understanding between China and the West" which it is the most laudable aim of the promoters of the United Universities Scheme to bring about.

It is, unfortunately, only too obvious that the majority of people in Europe and America who generously subscribe to foreign missions are sadly ignorant of the differences in doctrine and method and in personal qualifications that divide missionaries in China, and it is certain that many of them would be shocked to hear of the kind of Christianity that is in some quarters supposed to be good enough for the "heathen Chinee." A few months ago a well-known English newspaper in Shanghai published an article in which the belief was expressed that the narrow religious doctrines once held and taught by Protestant missionaries in China were undergoing a welcome modification, especially in respect of the modern theory of a "progressive development" of Christian truth and a more generous recognition of the value of the non-Christian religions formerly held to be of Satanic origin.[1] The article in question produced an indignant protest from a missionary resident in the remote province of Kansu, who, after repudiating on behalf of himself and "by far the larger part of the

[1] Biogtry, ignorance, and intolerance were not a monopoly of the missionaries who came to China. Much the same state of things existed in India. A writer in *The East and the West* (Oct., 1909, p. 401) remarks that "the early missionaries adopted a policy of frontal attack on Hinduism. They taught that everything outside of Christianity was of the Devil."

missionaries of China" any sympathy with the theory of "progressive development," made an appreciative reference to a brother missionary who had declared his thankfulness that the form of theology to which he gave his adherence was "just the up-grade theology of the late Mr. Spurgeon."[1] I dare not pretend to a clear apprehension of the precise signification of an "up-grade theology," but, judging from the tenor of some of Mr. Spurgeon's published discourses, I am satisfied that it is a theology which will never be accepted by the educated classes of the people of China, and one which the university authorities will not, if they are wise, recommend to their more intelligent pupils.

It is somewhat unfortunate that, though some clear-sighted missionaries to-day are willing to admit that many of their predecessors held and taught religious views that displayed an almost stupefying degree of narrowness and bigotry, they do not always realise that some of their own religious teachings and scriptural interpretations may be regarded as equally erroneous or imperfect by their successors. They may reply that they can, after all, teach only in accordance with the light that is in them—that they can promulgate only the Christianity of to-day, not the hypothetical Christianity of a hundred years hence. This is true enough, but in view of the extraordinarily rapid changes that Christian interpretation has undergone in recent years, and the possibility—to say the least—of similar changes in the future, would it not be wise and proper for the university authorities to use extreme caution in impressing the minds of Chinese students with doctrines and dogmas which may subsequently require to be discarded or explained away?[2] Those of us who stand

[1] See *North China Daily News* of Oct. 23, 1909.

[2] See above, pp. 33-39.

outside all Christian denominations, but are interested in Christianity as one of the embodiments of the undying religious instincts of mankind, are sometimes shocked at what appear to us the insincere and disingenuous attempts of some theologians to reconcile certain biblical statements or Christian dogmas with scientific facts which are clearly opposed to such dogmas or statements. It is said that a certain American divine who was keenly desirous of reconciling the Christian doctrine of the Fall with the indubitable scientific fact that during his earthly sojourn man has not fallen but risen, made the brilliant suggestion that the process in question was perhaps a *fall upward.*[1] An ascending descent may mean something in a system of mysticism that aims at the reconciliation of contradictories, but to the ordinary lay mind the notion is likely to be a bewildering one, even if some connection be successfully established between an "upward fall" and an "up-grade theology."

If the university undertakes, whether by means of official lectures or by unofficial instruction in the hostels, to convey to the educated classes of China some of the opinions and beliefs held by Western theologians on the momentous questions with which religion concerns itself, it will belie its name as a university if it allows its students to suppose that these opinions and beliefs are accepted by all cultivated Western minds as incontro-

[1] See Philip Vivian's *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), p. 215. *Cf.* the following incontrovertible statement by the gifted author of *The Religion of All Good Men:* "Great truths, of which Christ never dreamed, are put forward as truths of the gospel. Teaching diametrically opposed to, is now 'reconciled' with, that of Christ. Words of Christ, which were false or mistaken, are being left on one side or explained away. We are being told that 'Christianity is progressive' (which means that the mind of man is progressive and has grown out of a good deal that is in Christianity), and that, though 'Christ abideth for ever,' he is not 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for all time.'"

vertible truths. Educated China will in course of time undoubtedly find out for itself these two undeniable facts: that "there is scarcely a dogma of Christianity which is not hotly combated in Europe by Christian as well as by agnostic writers,"[1] and that "there exists to-day an enormous and ever-increasing number of serious and intelligent persons whom Christianity, both historically and ethically, fails to satisfy."[2] It will be impossible for the university to disclaim, in its corporate capacity, all responsibility for the Christian doctrines that may be taught in its various hostels or colleges as established truths; and it will gain nothing, in the long run, by concealing inconvenient facts under a veil which sooner or later will be ruthlessly torn aside by the Chinese themselves.

But it is the express object of the promoters of the university scheme to check the advance of materialism in China by "letting in the flood-tide of spiritual forces to counteract it."[3] How can this be accomplished, it may be asked, except through the medium of Christianity, and how can Christianity be taught if its dogmatic framework be ignored? This is surely a late hour at which to advance the theory that a lofty code of morality, and noble ideals in politics and social life, cannot exist apart from the Christian faith, and cannot be taught except through the Old and New Testaments. At the International Congress on Moral Education held at the University of London in September, 1908, a French deputy, "in a short, courageous paper, made it clear that the leading French educationists *had long ceased to regard religion as any part of the content of moral education, or as having any vital relation to it.* Religion

[1] Alston's *White Man's Work in Asia and Africa*, p. 57.

[2] *The Religion of All Good Men*, by H. W. Garrod, p. 159.

[3] These are the words of the veteran missionary, Dr. Timothy Richard.

is to receive a formal acknowledgment. Children must be taught 'the respect due to the idea of religion and the tolerance due to all its forms without exception. But for the rest they are to be taught that the chief mode of honouring God consists in each doing his duty according to his conscience and his reason.'"[1] Even if we assume that France is given over to the Powers of Darkness, dare we assert that there was no morality in the Roman Republic, or in the pagan Germania described for us by Tacitus, or that Western civilisation owes nothing to Hellenism or to the sturdy Goth? Is there no sound morality to-day outside the Christian fold: in Japan, for example—or even in China itself? It will be urged, perhaps, that, however these things may be, Christianity alone is capable of stemming the flood of materialism—a task too arduous for the languid forces of Shinto, Buddhism, or Confucianism. But, strangely enough, we learn from one who is himself an apostle of Western religious culture in China that it is precisely in the Christian West that the tide of materialism is running strongest. "This falling of the religious tide," says Dr. Timothy Richard, "is so powerful as to imperil whole nations, even the most advanced who trust more in Dreadnoughts than in righteous reciprocity. This is a return to savagery. It has its chief leaders in the West to-day." Thus, if China and Japan are falling under the spell of materialism, it is no other than the Christian West itself that must accept the responsibility. It is true that this proves nothing against Christianity; far more important is it to note that even the ethical and spiritual forces that oppose materialism in the West are by no means exclusively ranged under the Christian banner. "It cannot be doubted," writes a Congrega-

[1] See paper by Prof. J. H. Muirhead in *The Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1909, p. 348. (The italics are mine.)

tional minister, "that the Churches have lost their hold upon two classes of every community—the cultured classes and the industrial classes." "I am disposed to think," said the late Prof. A. B. Bruce, of Glasgow, "that a great and steadily-increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside the organised Churches, not by godlessness, but rather by exceptional moral earnestness." "The leadership of science and art and literature is already almost entirely in the hands of men who have broken with organised Christianity. The same may be said of the guides and pioneers in social and political reform."[1] Devout Christians have watched in vain for any sign that the decay of faith in the Christian creeds is being accompanied by any general collapse of morality. They are obliged to admit, if they are honest, that large numbers of "infidels" are not only chivalrous, honourable, and high-principled, but are often men of deep religious instinct; and that an abandonment of Christianity does not necessarily indicate the acceptance of what is usually stigmatised (rather vaguely) as Materialism. Very slowly and reluctantly the educated West is coming to realise that a belief in a formulated creed is not an essential foundation for a moral and upright life, and also that religion is not necessarily synonymous with the Christian faith. Perhaps some day, when the proposed Chinese university is in good working order, a few of the more intelligent students may begin to show curiosity with regard to the moral and religious condition of those great English universities to which their own *alma mater* owed its origin. And what will they find? "A generation is growing up," writes the fellow and tutor of an Oxford college, "which is calling *ethical* Christianity

[1] *The Hibbert Journal*, July, 1906, p. 846. Article by the Rev. K. C. Anderson, D.D.

into question, just as the two preceding generations called in question *historical* Christianity. Standing myself nearer to this generation than to any other, and being, from the nature of my profession, in contact on all hands with young men of many types belonging to the educated classes, I say, with some confidence, that never, I believe, was the hold of religion upon the minds of the youth of this country stronger, nor the hold of Christianity weaker. And, with still greater confidence, I would affirm that the difficulty which young men to-day have in accepting Christianity is not intellectual, but moral. I speak that which I know."[1]

[1] H. W. Garrod's *The Religion of All Good Men*, pp. vii.-viii. (London, 1906). In the statement of aims drawn up by the promoters of the United Universities Scheme it is stated that "there is at present in the British universities a quite unprecedented enthusiasm for missionary enterprise, which has spread to circles previously unaffected by such interests." *Cf.* also a sermon preached at St. Paul's by the Bishop of Stepney on Feb. 11, 1910, and reported in *The Times* of Feb. 12. This view seems curiously different from that of Mr. Garrod. Perhaps Mr. Garrod himself (in a review of Wells's *First and Last Things* in *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1909, pp. 682-3) gives us a clue to the true state of affairs. The young men of Oxford, he says—or a great and representative number of them—"do not believe in the Resurrection, but they are interested in social reform. Accordingly, they rush into the Christian Social Union or the priesthood without taking time to be fair with their own souls, and without ever once thinking sincerely and ultimately upon subjects the most important. And, being clever and interesting and enthusiastic, they mislead others." Certainly, if these young men rush into the priesthood without believing in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, they have only themselves to blame if they become unhappy and disillusionised thereafter. It is not as though they were seminary-bred, like the young priests of the Church of Rome, and did not begin to use their reasoning faculties until it was too late. The fact is that the new activity of the Church in social matters rather confuses the issue nowadays. As regards the interest taken at present by the British universities in missionary enterprise, this is certainly due in part to a keen desire to bring *Western civilisation* and its highest ideals to the East; and this again is largely owing to a vague foreboding that if something of the kind be not done energetically and promptly Western civilisation will

Are you going to let your Chinese students find out these things for themselves, after you have done your best to keep them in ignorance of the matter, or will you be honest and tell them the truth at once?

Surely there are ways in which the young Chinese student may be initiated into the highest ethical ideals of Western civilisation without encumbering him with creeds and dogmas which you yourselves are rapidly discarding. I do not refer merely to the direct inculcation of a sound morality, though that is important. A great deal of the "materialism" to which modern science is supposed to lead may be kept at a safe distance by educating the student's æsthetic and artistic instincts. "Teach what is wise—that is morality; teach what is wise and beautiful—that is religion."[1] If the student learns to appreciate the beauty of knowledge and wisdom as well as their usefulness, there need be little fear that his spiritual or emotional faculties will become atrophied, even though he be not taught to believe in sacraments and vicarious punishments and up-grade theologies. It may be that if the truth towards which all religions, all philosophies, all the sciences are groping is ever to be made manifest to mankind, the pagan in the East will behold it just as soon and just as clearly as the Christian in the West, and that it will become the possession of neither the one not the other so long as the religious and emotional instincts are cabined and confined within the grim walls of theological formulas.

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be in danger of overthrow by a regenerated and reorganised Oriental civilisation that will draw its inspiration to a good extent from ideals different from, and perhaps antagonistic to, those of the West. See above, pp. 12 *seq.*, 293 *seq.*

[1] Quoted in Lord Avebury's *Peace and Happiness*, p. 305.

"When whelmed are altar, priest, and creed;
When all the faiths have passed;
Perhaps, from darkening incense freed,
God may emerge at last."[1]

There is one other point that should be kept well in view by those who are to guide the fortunes of a Western university on Chinese soil. Do not assume too hastily that the teaching is all to be on your side and the learning to be all on the side of the Chinese. Were it not fitting that those in charge of China's Oxford should follow the practice of that typical "Clerke of Oxenforde" who still lives for us in the pages of your English Chaucer?

"Souninge in moral vertu was his speche
And gladly wolde he lern and gladly teche."

Be exceedingly tender in your treatment of the old philosophers of China—Confucius and the rest—not only when you are instilling Western wisdom into minds saturated with Confucian lore, but even more so when you see—as you will see—a tendency among many of your most brilliant Chinese pupils to heap contempt on the sages of their country. A China that ceases to respect her own past will deserve the scorn, not the admiration, of her Western teachers. At one time, as we have seen, all non-Christian faiths were regarded by Christians as the work of the Devil. The wisest among them now know—and the wisest among Chinese know too—that perfection and absolute truth are to be found neither in the systems of the West nor in those of the East. "Our wisdom is to recognise clearly," says a singularly fair-minded English clergyman, "the provisional nature of our present ethical and spiritual

[1] William Watson's *New Poems* (London, 1909).

knowledge. All our present religions are but symbols. All our present moralities are but as narrow and fragile stairs sloping through unmeasured regions of darkness up to far-off unknown heights of genuine perfection." If you of the West have much to teach us of the East, there is also a good deal that you yourselves, if you will, may learn fron China; while beyond the farthest shores of all the wisdom of Europe and Asia there stretch the waters of an unexplored ocean in which fairy islands of beauty and wonder still await discovery by the explorers of both East and West.

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